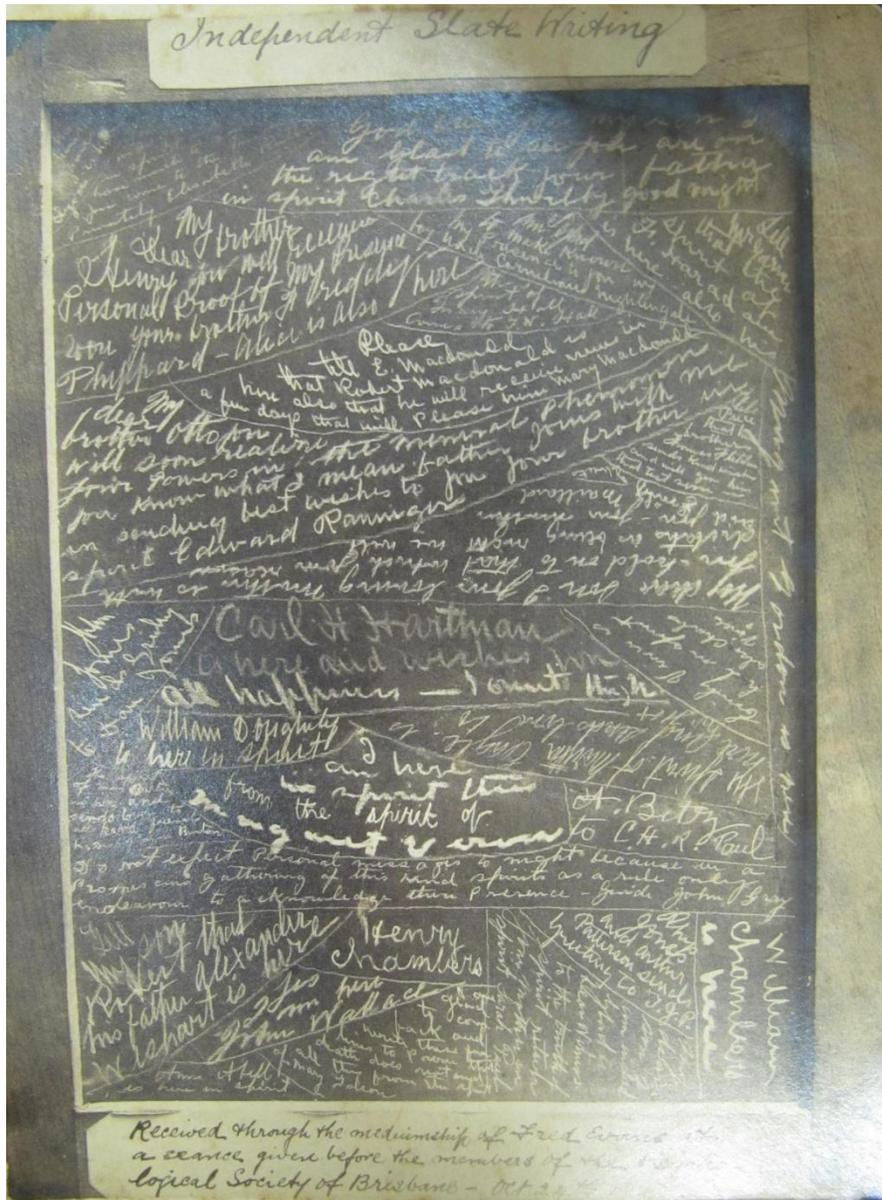


Slate Craft



Compilation of Slatework by the Masters of Same

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Forward:

I find routines with standard sized slates not only simple and beautiful, but a lot of fun to perform. With so much passed on to us by the Masters of slate work, it is surprising this versatile prop is not used in more routines. Just about everything on the market was found in digitized versions in online library throughout the World Wide Web. But you have to dig for these little gems. Then polish them up and WOW your audience.

For this reason I wanted to collect all the public domain publications I could find into a single volume. There are some in the community who present the work of these Masters to uneducated buyers as original, or forget to give credit where it is due.

Your start in SlateCraft is right here. For FREE.

New material will be added as I find them or are referred to them in the public domain archives.

In the instances where slate routines were included in a book of general magic, I have included just the information on slate work. I have copied and paste the PDFs and digitally scanned just as they appear in the original material. The original spelling and grammar have been kept out of difference to the original author.

A word of caution when trying any of the routines using chemicals. Study what has been written by the authors, seek out the advice of someone who has knowledge of these chemicals and when you are sure you know what these chemical combinations with do or not do, forget it! There are enough non chemical methods to keep you busy. I doubt you would ever need to take the chance of something bad happening pursuing these dangerous methods.

Pete McMillan

February 2016

St. George, Utah

The Best Tricks With Slates

By

PETER WARLOCK

To my
Mother and Father
this book is affectionately dedicated.

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THE BEST TRICKS WITH SLATES

by Peter Warlock

In the following pages of this book you will find a complete course in the use of slates, a study of which will enable you to present only the “Best Tricks” in this field for the mystification of your audience.

You will find many effects that you can use at once, regardless of the conditions under which you are in the habit of working.

I have covered all angles from close-up to stage presentation, so that I feel you are certain to- find effects to your liking.

In addition I have included several ways in which the slate may be used as a helpful auxiliary.

For the purpose of classification I have divided this book into five sections.

Part One deals with certain methods whereby writing can be obtained on a slate or slates, such slates being ordinary, i.e. free from any trick device.

Part Two deals with those methods of obtaining writing on a slate or slates, such effects being brought about by the use of a flap or flaps.

Part Three deals with those methods of obtaining writing on a slate or slates, by means of chemicals.

Part Four deals with methods for obtaining writing on slates not covered in the first three sections.

Part Five deals with the use of the slate as an auxiliary.

I should like to state that I have chosen methods and effects which appeal to me personally. To try to present every method of obtaining writing on slates, would be tiring to both audience and demonstrator.

One point I should like to emphasize is that in all methods the audience are never left in doubt as to the unpreparedness of the slates.

Section One

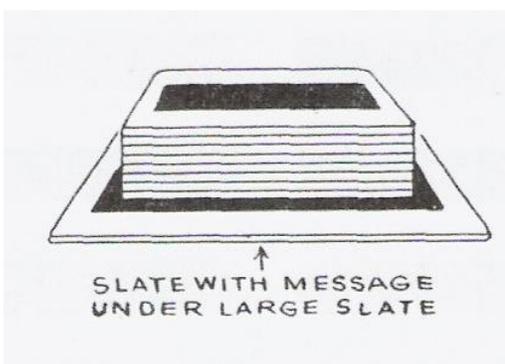
WHERE IN THE OPERATOR, USING ORDINARY SLATES, OBTAINS WRITING ON ONE OF THE SLATES

The first method I shall deal with is one that has found great favour with mediums for séance work, but which I have never seen employed by a magician in the course of a magical entertainment. The first mention of it is, I believe, in *Spirit Slate Writing* by W. E. Robinson, a rather wonderful book, written over forty years ago when Robinson (Chung Ling Soo) had just finished his apprenticeship with the Great Herrmann. The drawback, from a magician's point of view, is the large number of slates involved. Where a magician is working under normal stage conditions this method has little use as a *magical* effect, but where he is able to dictate his conditions and have a small drawing-room audience, something good may come from it.

Here is the effect:—

The operator shows a number of small slates stacked on top of a large slate. The large slate acts as a tray, and the small slates are offered for examination to individual members of the audience. In this offering the operator removes the slates one at a time, and as he takes each back it is placed under the large slate. The small slates are then stacked together and a question is written on the large slate. An answer to the question is then found on one of the slates in the stack. The essential weakness is that about eight slates are utilized in order to obtain a message on one.

The secret is simple. Underneath the large slate, the performer has a small slate bearing on the underside the necessary "answer." The other small slates



(say seven) are placed on top of the large slate. As the performer receives the slates back he places them underneath the small slate, so that when all have been collected, the "message" slate is on top of the pile. All that remains is for the "question" to be written and the "answer" produced. That is the method as described in the book, but as you can see, the merest subterfuge the slate which bears the writing can

be buried in the pile instead of being the top slate. You will have noticed that after two slates have been placed underneath the "message" and the large slate, it is physically difficult to add the rest of the slates. Therefore there is nothing easier at this point than to discard the large slate with some excuse, the rest of the slates being placed on top of the "message" slate.

JARDINE ELLIS ROUTINE

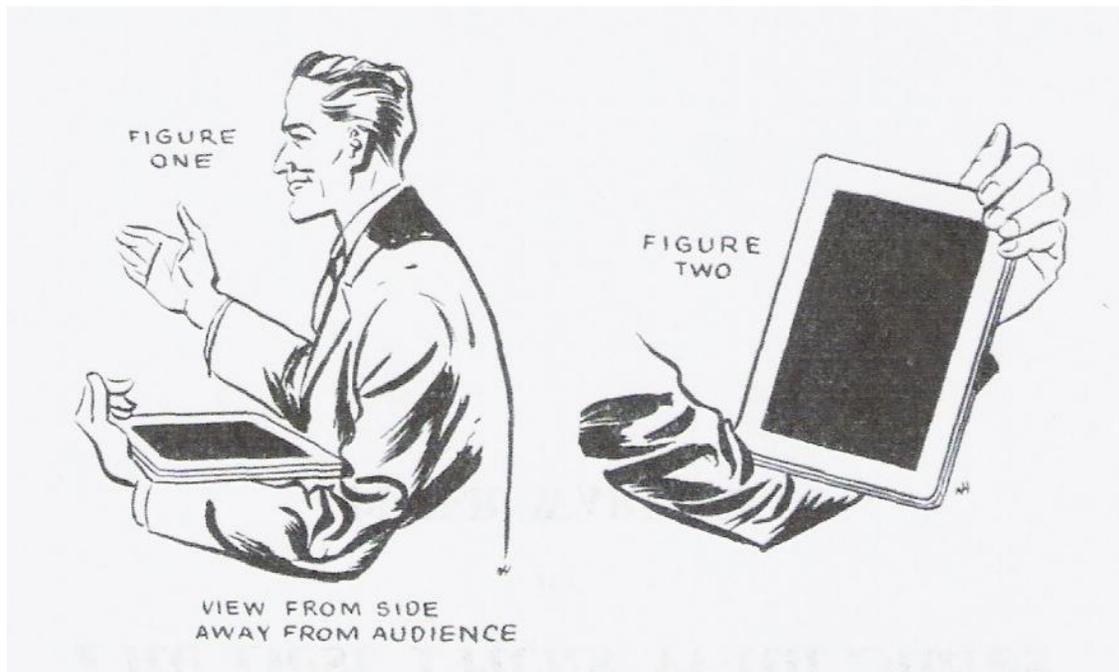
The next method is one introduced by the late Jardine Ellis. It bears that stamp of true magic which so often includes audaciousness. The effect is apparently impossible.

Three *common* school slates are cleaned and marked by the assistant one after the other; they are also marked on both sides and tested for any faking. In spite of all these precautions a long message completely covering one side of the middle slate of the stack, duly appears, written clearly in chalk. Father rigorous tests reveal nothing to either assistant or audience.

You require three unprepared slates, a piece of chalk and a duster. Prepare for the trick by thoroughly cleaning and drying all three slates; note that they have not any accidental distinguishing marks, such as a large knot in the grain of the frame of one, or a flaw in the slate of another.

Take slate No. 1 and upon one side write out your message, spread it out well over the slate, but leave a little margin on each side of the writing. In the top right hand corner of this side of the slate write a figure 1.

Turn the slate over and in the same way and position mark a figure 2. Hold this slate with writing uppermost and pile the other two slates on top of it. Grasp the stack by the top right hand corner, the arm below and diagonally across the slates, the back of hand downwards towards stage. The bottom left hand corner of the stack lies in the bend of the elbow. *Figure 1 and 2.*



Thus you walk on. The stage is set with two chairs side by side and fairly close together. You have a piece of chalk in your pocket and a dry duster on the back of one chair.

Don't pick the most suspicious or supercilious member of your audience. Borrow, if you can, one of the genial and reasonably good natured brand. And for goodness sake, having got him, keep him in good humour, for your whole aim is to win his confidence and make him believe that, up to a certain point, you have not done a suspicious sleight or move. If you arouse any irritation or an even good natured desire to "get one back on you," you are lost and there is no "get-out."

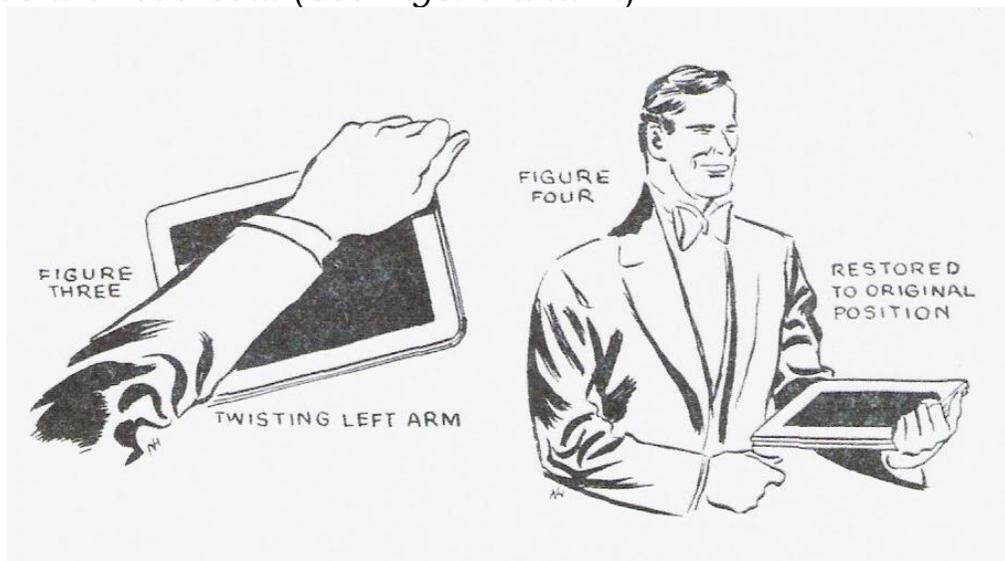


Invite him to the chair furthest from you (he stands on your left), you stand beside the other chair, one foot resting carelessly on one of the side rungs of the chair under the seat, and still nursing your stock of slates.

Patter genially, hand him the duster and also the first slate from the top of the stack. See *that he* wipes it thoroughly on both sides. Receive the slate back from him. Place it on the stack and produce chalk from pocket.

State that you are about to mark the slate on both sides, as also the other slates, but only after each has been cleaned by him. You say, "I will mark each side of the slate with consecutive figures. This side 'one' and this side 'two'." You apparently mark, in the top right hand corner, a figure 1 and turning the slate over undoubtedly mark a 2. But you merely simulate writing with your thumb nail in the first instance. The actual chalk is pushed up too high between the finger and thumb, but is visible. You must not hesitate. A simple flinch and the assistant may note the swindle. You now withdraw the next slate and hand it to the assistant to clean, as before. Now give particular attention to the following moves.

You are still holding the stack of plates as when you first came on. The assistant is starting to clean the second slate. Remark to him, "You have noticed, I suppose, that these slates are solid; there is no trick or mechanism in the frames. Let me show the audience what I mean—hold tight." You lean over your chair towards him and with the right hand grasp the edge of his slate and give one or two tugs—he, of course, pulling against you. It is at this moment, and under perfect misdirection, you twist your left arm, turning *your* two slates over and bringing the arm above them. Then, pressing the end of the stack against your body quietly restore your arm to its original position—*but the slates are reversed.* (See Figs. 3 and 4.)



When the first slate was marked it was replaced on the stack with the “2” uppermost. The blank side of the faked slate is now on top and that also shows a 2—to both assistant and audience nothing has happened. You have just leaned over and proved the second slate solid. You take it back, duly cleaned on both sides, and mark as before, 3 and 4, one on each side, and still at the right hand top corner.

Now comes the moment when you have to convince your assistant that he is being quite fairly dealt with; and it must be convincing. “Three on this side, four on this side,” you continue (*writing as you talk*). “There is only one more slate. When you have cleaned it I will mark it five and six.” The slates are slightly fanned—the fake slate shows its 2 in the corner—you drop it carelessly on the seat of your chair and on top of it the “3-4 slate.” You at once hand the *lowest* and *last* slate to be cleaned. The problem is now solved—with a single objection. Yes, I *know* this slate was originally marked on one side only with a 2, but after the “turn-over,” an active thumb obliterated this little item. You now mark the *last* slate 5 and 6, and inform your assistant that now he must watch you closely. The slates are stacked and placed on the seat of the chair and the fun begins.

(Acknowledgement to George Johnson, publisher of Jardine Ellis Secrets.)

ROUTINE WITH TWO SLATES

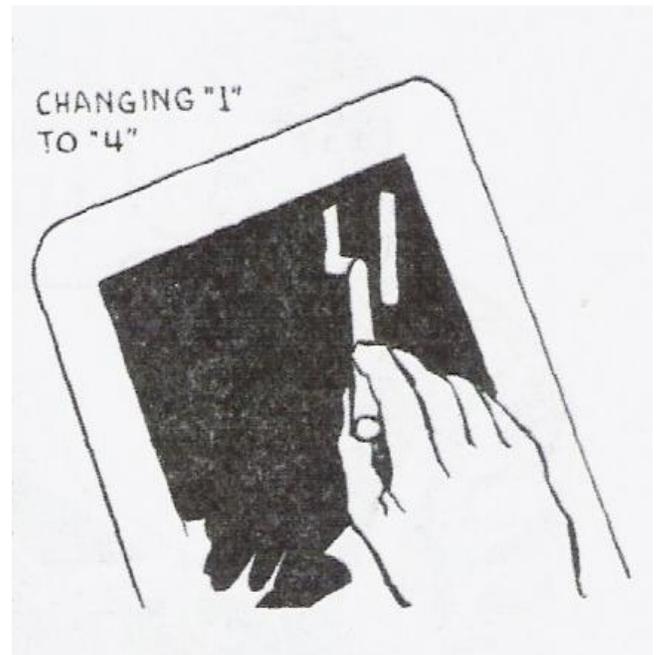
Now for a method using two slates. Two slates are shown and numbered on each side, and after being handed to a spectator a message appears on the side of one. Although there is nothing to prevent the message covering the whole side of a slate, I prefer to have a few words written diagonally, across it. The reason will be apparent in the explanation.

Think of your two slates as A and B. On one side of B, write a word or some words diagonally across its surface. When you have done this write a figure 1 in the top right hand corner. The slate is then turned over to bring the writing side underneath. Slate A is then placed on top of slate B. When commencing the effect the performer picks up both slates together and standing preferably with his right side to the audience, places the slates on the left forearm, the fingers of the left hand gripping the corner of the slates whilst the opposite corner lies in the bend of the arm.

As the writing has been made diagonally there is no chance of the audience seeing anything on the lower slate. Taking a piece of chalk from his pocket the performer writes 1 in the top right hand corner of slate A. Slate A is then lifted by its left side, turned over and slid underneath slate B. On slate B, 2 is marked in the top right hand corner, and while this is being done the

thumb of the left hand rubs off the 1 on slate A. Slate B is then lifted and turned in exactly the same way as slate A, great care being taken that no glimpse of the message is seen. Slate A now lies on top and in the right hand top corner the performer writes 3. Now a different move is made. Instead of lifting this slate and sliding it underneath the other, *it is lifted to a vertical position and simply turned over*, the performer then placing a 4 in the top right hand corner. (This side is the original side marked 2.)

The slates can now be fanned, so that the numbers are all displayed to the audience without displaying the message. A large elastic band is then snapped round them and in due course the message is disclosed. If the moves are carried out in a straightforward manner, there is no suspicion by the most astute that the slates have not been shown and marked on all sides. Just a note here. If your audience is slightly below you there is little need to erase the 1 originally written, as a couple of strokes with the chalk will change the 1 to 4, the top of the slate not being seen.



MARO 'S ROUTINE

Another method utilizing two ordinary slates was used by the late Maro. It is a method which few could use and get the full effect, but with the necessary personality it could prove as good as any. The procedure is that the performer walks down into the audience with the two slates. One is handed to a spectator with a request that he give it a thorough examination. The slate is taken back and the other offered. When examined it is taken back and placed against the other. A message appears on the side of one slate.

That is the effect to the audience. What actually happens is this. First of all the performer needs two slates. On one side of a slate a message is written. The slate is turned over and on top is placed a similar slate, which is unmarked on both sides. Descending into the auditorium, taking care that the message is not glimpsed, the performer walks to a spectator and asks him to examine one of the slates. As he says this, the performer takes the top slate and hands it to the spectator; when it has been looked over the performer asks for it back. As he takes the slate with one hand the performer

makes some verbal comment which serves to distract the attention of the audience from his hands. At the same time the examined slate is *brought over the top* of the message slate. Turning to another member of the audience the performer effects what is really a top change by handing on with his other hand the same slate that was examined at the commencement. After the slate is handed back it only remains to place them face to face and eventually reveal the message. It can easily be realized that if the performer has sufficient personality this effect can be made to excel every other method. Maro was a man who not only had this personality, but also had the confidence of the originator who has something good which cannot easily be copied. Incidentally, this method is, I believe, the first manipulative method on slate writing on record.

SHOWING SLATES BLANK ON BOTH SIDES

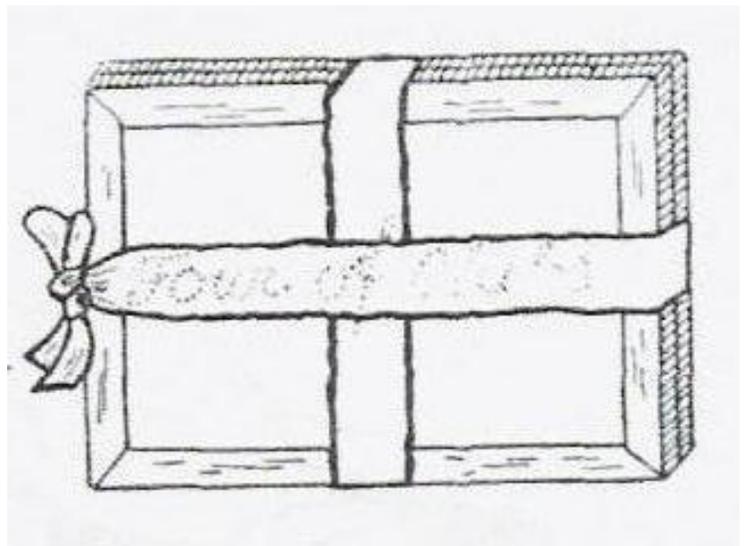
There may be many of you who have seen instructions for showing a slate (upon one side of which a message has been written) to be apparently blank on both sides. The method of doing this is based on the old “cricket bat” dodge. With a knife or paddle such a move is entirely deceptive, because part of the article can be rotated. A slate comes into a very different category and such a move has to be done too quickly to be really convincing. Whilst experimenting with two slates I did hit upon the exact moves which make something magical. The two slates to be used should be of the very small type. On one a message is written; the slate is then turned over and placed on top of the other. The two slates stacked should be placed on a table or chair on the performer’s right. The performer facing slowly right picks up both the slates with his right hand, fingers on top and thumb underneath. Still facing slightly right, the left hand comes across the performer’s body and removes the top slate, thumb on top, fingers underneath. The attention of the audience is called towards the slates and at the same time the left hand shows the other side of slate by turning it over (it is advisable to hold the slates by the corners). At the same time the right hand also apparently does the same thing, but what really happens is that the “cricket bat” dodge is used, the turning of this slate is simply simulated by an upward movement of the wrist. Synchronising with these hand movements the operator turns slightly left, which all helps to heighten the illusion. There is no need to use great speed, but naturally the movement of the right hand is slightly greater than the left. As the audience is not capable of seeing accurately more than one action at the time, the fact that three actions blend together makes this very deceptive. I am sure that where a magician finds that he has two slates and nothing else to achieve an effect, he might find this method of use.

EDWARD VICTOR'S ROUTINE

The last method in this group is that originated and popularized by that great manipulator Edward Victor. There must be few that have not read *Magic of the Hands* and in consequence only that few may not be acquainted with the method, and so with Mr. Edward Victor's permission I will give both the effect and the method.

The operator brings forward a pair of slates around which a piece of ribbon has been tied length- and cross-wise. The initials of a spectator are now asked for, and when given they are written in chalk, by the operator, in one corner of the top-most slate; the stack of slates, still tied, are turned over, and the slate now on top is also initialled. The ribbon is now untied and the remaining two sides of the slates are initialled. The two slates are placed together and the ribbon re-tied around them. A message then appears on the inner surface of one slate.

Like all really good things the secret is simple. First of all procure two slates of similar size. A piece of ribbon long enough to go easily round *the* slates. (For slates 11 in. x 9in. this means a length of nearly two yards.) The ribbon should be 2in. wide and if it can be obtained should have a narrow border of black or gold. (This has an illusory effect of making the ribbon seem narrower.) The message that is to appear is now



written across the surface of one slate. Care must be taken that the height of the letters is not greater than the width of the ribbon. This slate, message side up, is now placed on top of the other slate, the ribbon being placed over the message and tied around the slates. It is advisable that the bow of the ribbon should come on the narrow side of the slates.

The performer advances with the slates in his left hand and a piece of chalk in the right (the message side of the slates faces the audience). Asking for a spectator's initials, they are written in one corner of the message side. The slates are then turned over and two more initials placed on the slate facing the audience. Remarking that he wishes all sides to be initialled, the

performer unties the ribbon, removes it from the slates and drapes it over his left arm.

The topmost slate is then turned over, this incidentally allowing the audience to see the two inner sides blank. The top-most and unprepared slate is then initialled, after which it is placed behind the message slate, with the result that the blank side of this latter now faces the audience. This too, is initialled.

The slates can now be fanned in such a way that although the *initials* all show, no *message* can be seen. The ribbon is then handed to a spectator with the request that he should re-tie it around the slates. The message now awaits to be revealed.

This is indeed a beautiful method and in *Magic of the Hands* Mr. Edward Victor has appended many drawings which can be utilised in conjunction with this effect. All these drawings have the advantage over the written message insomuch that when revealed it would seem an impossibility that a mere piece of ribbon would conceal any one of them, as they seem to nearly occupy the slate.

I like all the methods I have described because the spectator can hardly say afterwards that the performer casually showed the slates or that he moved them about too quickly. There are, alas, too many methods used in magic where slates are too casually shown, and because of that they do not come within the scope of this paper.

Section Two

METHODS OF OBTAINING WRITING ON A SLATE OR SLATES BY THE USE OF A FLAP OR FLAPS

The actual construction and materials used in the manufacture of slates intended for use by magicians are sometimes a matter of importance, and therefore, before detailing some effects with slates in which a flap is used, I will classify some types of slates.

Firstly there is a genuine school slate. In the preceding effects with ordinary slates and manipulation there is little reason to use any other type. An advantage too, is that they can be obtained in different sizes. An excellent flap for a real slate can be made from a piece of zinc. The zinc should be cut to the exact size needed; it should then be thoroughly flattened and placed in moist earth for a period of about three weeks; at the end of this period it will be

found, when cleaned, that a splendid imitation of slate results. Care should be taken that the earth is packed tightly round the zinc and it is also advisable not to put the zinc in the ground when there is danger of frost.

Secondly there is the silicate type. The writing surface is made from fiber board and coated with blackboard paint. Its advantages are found in its lightness (sometimes an important factor), a dead background for chalk writing and the fact that a flap can be easily made to match the existing surface. At this point I should like to mention a satisfactory dead black paint. Purchase a one pound tin of good flat paint, remove the lid and pour off the liquid part of the contents; this will leave you with a thick viscous black substance. Now add to this sufficient quantity of turpentine to fill the tin and then stir well with a piece of wood. This paint mixture when applied not too thickly to wood, metal, or cardboard, gives a dead black surface.

A new type of writing surface to be used in the manufacture of slates is Bakelite. Walter Wandman at his works in Birmingham, England, makes great use of this comparatively new substance in many ways, its durability and strength combined with lightness making an appeal to the magician who wishes to travel as lightly as possible. Walter Wandman's slates in which this substance is used are beautiful products; not only is the finish excellent, but because of accurate machining every slate is of similar size.

An unbreakable slate appeared some while ago in the Woolworth stores. The writing surface was made of metal. Apparently only small stocks were released or else the demand was too small, as they seemed to be unobtainable after a period of a few months.

GETTING RID OF THE FLAP

I should now like to particularise the various types of flap slate. There is first and foremost, the ordinary slate with a loose-fitting flap. The general use of such a slate is well known, i.e., a message is written on the slate proper, the flap is then placed on top with the result that the slate appears unmarked on both writing sides. By disposing of the flap surreptitiously the operator can at a later stage show the writing on the slate. The business of getting rid of the flap is a matter that has been treated in a very off-hand manner by most conjurers. In many cases the side of the flap that lies against the message has a piece of newspaper pasted over it, the object of this is to allow the operator, in putting down the slate, to drop the flap on a similar piece of newspaper which is lying on a table or chair, with apparent concealment of the flap. This is done in a very slovenly manner without a real excuse for placing such slate on the table or chair. I would at this point like to digress

and draw attention to an action in a trick. This action is similar to the placing of a slate on a table, and appears in a book by David Devant, called *Magic Made Easy*. The action requires the placing of a cricket bat on the magician's table, at the same time the psychological effect on the spectators must be that the magician adds nothing to the bat. This is the passage from that book:—

“Now,” says the conjurer, getting into the position usually assumed by a batsman, “when I say ‘play,’ you are to bowl the cards at me. No underhand bowling, mind, because everyone knows there is nothing underhand about conjuring. Hold the cards so that I can see them, please. Don’t bowl them until I say ‘Play!’ Now then, one, two . . . No, no, sir, you are not holding them right.” (Here performer raises the bat with his right hand, places it across his left hand, and going to the right hand side of the table, places the bat directly over the handkerchief. He presses the bat down just for an instant, taking care neither to pause too long nor to look directly at the table or the bat throughout the movement. After putting the bat down the conjurer walks across to the boy and shows him how to hold the cards.”

There you see the operator has given his audience a natural reason for putting the bat down. Similar excuses can also be found for the action of placing down a slate in order to dispose of the flap. You will notice that the Master refers to placing *it on* a tartan handkerchief. It is just as easy to cover the flap with material as it is with newspaper. Most magicians if they do not carry their own tables often carry a table cover. A piece of the same material will serve well. Newspaper, unless there is a real reason for its introduction seems to have no real affinity with a slate. With this type of slate it is unfortunate that it cannot be examined before and after the effect performed although it is only in exceptionally close-quarter work that such examination would be required. After all, if an article has been examined once, and the audience have no doubt that at some later stage such an article has not been changed,, further examination is unnecessary and time wasting. Let us suppose that a slate has been examined at the beginning (a logical procedure), the climax of the trick will be the obtaining of a message, etc., on the slate. The trick is finished, further examination, unless called for by the audience, would constitute an anti-climax. In this respect it is important to remember that if the operator is using the loose-fitting flap and he requires the slate to be examined at the beginning of the effect, the flap with a message on it will have to be added instead of extracted. If such procedure is adopted an addition of two pieces of conjurer's wax at diagonally opposite corners on the side of the flap which will lie against the surface of the slate will, after

pressure has been brought by the fingers, make for greater ease in handling in the final stages of the effect.

GETTING RID OF FLAP II

Another clever method for getting rid of the flap has been used successfully by Doc. Nixon and Al. -Baker. In this instance one side of the flap is covered with two or three sheets of white paper to match in size the sheets of a writing pad. When ready to drop the flap, the slate is held in the right hand with the flap side down. The writing pad is held in the left hand. To dispose of the flap, the right hand approaches the left momentarily, the slate is brought over the writing pad and the flap drops onto the face of the pad. The left hand holding the pad and flap as one, moves away and lays the pad on your table. The slate, now free of the flap, is set against some object with the message to the rear to be revealed later.

THE LOCKING FLAP

The introduction of a device for locking the flap, gave the operator the opportunity of allowing the slate to be examined both before and after the effect. My first slate with a locking device was one made by the late Bretma. It consisted of a silicate slate with a cardboard flap; the flap was held in place by spring pressure, a firm movement with the finger tips causing dislodgement of the flap. I liked this piece of apparatus so much that I had a similar model made, real slate being utilised in its construction. Owing to the fact that I had to content myself with a flap taken from another slate this naturally made the finished product rather heavy. The late Bretma's business was taken over by Mr. Shannon who produced the Bretma slate in real slate. To avoid the weight occasioned by the flap, both bed and body were reduced in thickness by grinding. Shannon supplied another slate unprepared but similar in weight and size, so that once the magician was rid of the flap, the slate with writing on could be placed on top of the unprepared slate and a two slate effect be obtained. The locking device applied to one slate is to be found in the product of Mr. Walter Wandman. The idea is that of the late C. O. Williams of Cardiff, and by using bakelite as a slate surface and for a flap, Mr. Wandman has turned out a splendid product which combines lightness with unbreakability.

One of the most ingenious sets of slates is that marketed by Thayer of Los Angeles. A flap is locked in one slate. When placed upon a slate of similar size and appearance the magician can with the smallest amount of effort cause the flap to be released and fall on the other slate where it is re-locked. Both slates will stand the most stringent and meticulous examination.

The draw-back with the Thayer slates is that fully constructed and finished they bear no resemblance to the type of slate that we know in England. Owing, however, to the fact that they can have the most critical examination, this is not insuperable, and no doubt many members will recall the late Douglas Dexter, on the occasion of an Occult Committee exposition, using such a pair of slates with great effect.

It may well be asked, "Is the locking device worth while?" Personally I think it is, although the consideration of time, place and operator, play a very important part.

EFFECTS WITH THE FLAP SLATE

I am now going to detail various methods and *effects* in which the slate or slates with a flap take part, and in one of these the effect as stated could only be achieved by use of Thayer or Shannon Slates. If you think that the effect is good it is quite obvious that the locking device is worth while.

Just one more thing. Chalk has a habit of smudging easily. In some of the effects to be described it is important that no such smudging takes place—for instance, where there is writing on both the slate and flap. There are two ways to obviate this defect. The first is to write the message with ordinary chalk and then to spray it with "Fixatif." This is a solution sold by dealers in artists' sundries and is used by workers in pastel for fixing their pictures. The other way is to put the message on with "chemical" chalk. This latter will be referred to later, in **Section Three**.

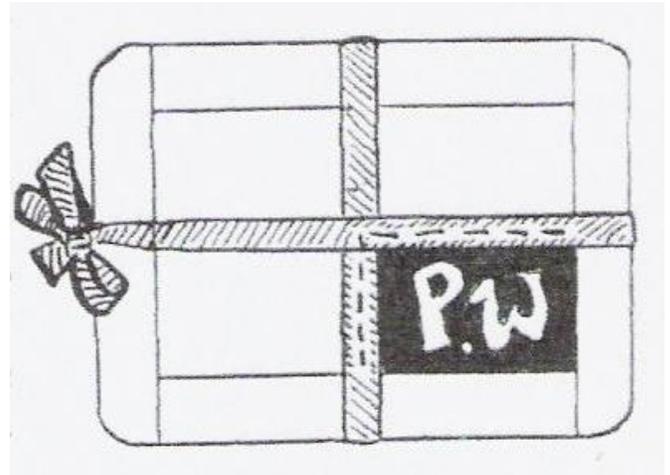
Now for the methods. The first, as you will see, is a natural follow-on from the Edward Victor method which has just been described. I call it:

A NEW SLANT ON A SLATE THEME

First of all I will describe the procedure, which is as follows: The operator picks up from the table a velvet bag, from which he removes a pair of slates tied lengthwise and breadthwise with a piece of ribbon measuring about an inch in width. The velvet bag is replaced on table. Holding the pair of slates with his left hand, the performer takes from his pocket a piece of chalk. Asking for a spectator's initials, the performer writes them in corner of one side of a slate. The slates, still tied together, are turned over and another pair of initials requested, which are also written on a corner of the slate. At this stage the ribbon is untied and hung over the performer's left arm. Two more sets of initials are requested and these are placed, one on each side of the remaining two sides of the slates. A spectator is then requested to tie the ribbon round both the slates, and hold them in that condition. In due course a

message is found filling practically the whole of the inside of one of the slates. You will notice that the actual showing and marking of the slates is identical in effect with Edward Victor's method, but instead of the ribbon serving to mask a message as in that method, it serves to mask a peculiarly shaped flap.

Preparation. Two slates of almost exact dimensions are required, also a flap which will fit either slate. I myself prefer slates with zinc flap. A quarter of this flap now cut away so that when the flap is placed on one of the slates, only three quarters of it is covered (see illustration). Heavy dotted lines show position of flap.



One side of the flap is then covered with the same type of velvet of which the bag that contains the slates is made. We will now imaginarily number the slates 1 and 2, and the sides of these slates respectively A, B, C, and D. On side A of slate 1, a message is written which will fill approximately three quarters of it, i.e. the portion of the slate that would be covered by the flap. Such filling should not be too obvious. The flap is now placed over the message with the velvet side against the chalk. Slate 1 with flap side on top, is then placed on slate 2, and the two slates tied together with ribbon, care being taken that the paths of the ribbon across the slates in both directions hide the outline of the flap. The slates in a tied condition are then put into the velvet bag. I have said very little about this article, but would suggest that it is simply a plain bag of velvet with a cord or tape running round the opening. In his right trousers pocket the operator places a piece of chalk.

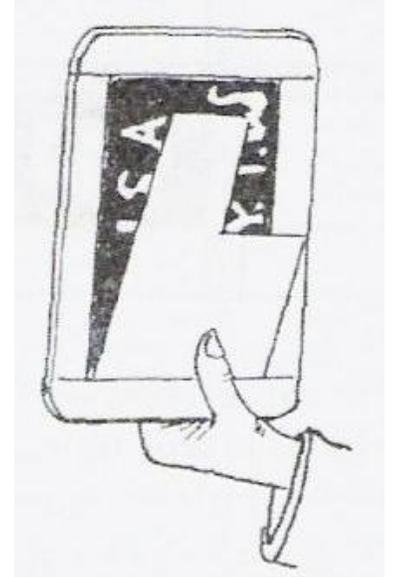
Presentation. On the performer's left should be a small table, and to the left of the table a chair. The bag containing the slates is lying on the table. The performer removes the bag and slates from the table. I will now tabulate numerically the essential moves:—

1. The slates are taken in the left hand and held in a vertical position, so that side A of slate 1 faces the spectators. Right hand takes chalk from trousers pocket.

2. Initials are requested, and written in corner of slate not covered by flap.

3. Slates, still tied together, are turned over so that side D of slate 2 now faces the spectators. Right hand pulls on the ribbon (which should be tied in a bow), releasing it from the slates, and places it over left arm.

4. Two more initials are requested and written in corner of side D.
5. Slate 2 is now turned over and two initials placed on side C.
6. Slates at this stage should be held in the left hand, supported from the back, i.e., side farthest from spectators, with thumb. By pressing on the front of the slate facing audience the flap which is resting against the thumb is allowed to fall away from the top of the slate, the ridge of the slate acting as a fulcrum. (see illustration)



7. Right hand grasps at a point near where they are being held by the left hand, the position of the flap being maintained. Left hand is removed. Left hand now slides slate 2 up in front of slate 1, and places it in between the flap and slate 1. The flap is now pushed flat against slate 2.

8. Performer has now marked slates on all four sides. Requesting a spectator to help him by sitting in the chair on the left of performer, this spectator is handed the ribbon.

9. Performer requests the spectator to hold the ribbon horizontally. Whichever way the spectator sets about this task, the performer tells him that it is wrong. "This is the way," he says and at the same time places the two slates on the velvet bag, and crossing to spectator, shows him the way to hold the ribbon.

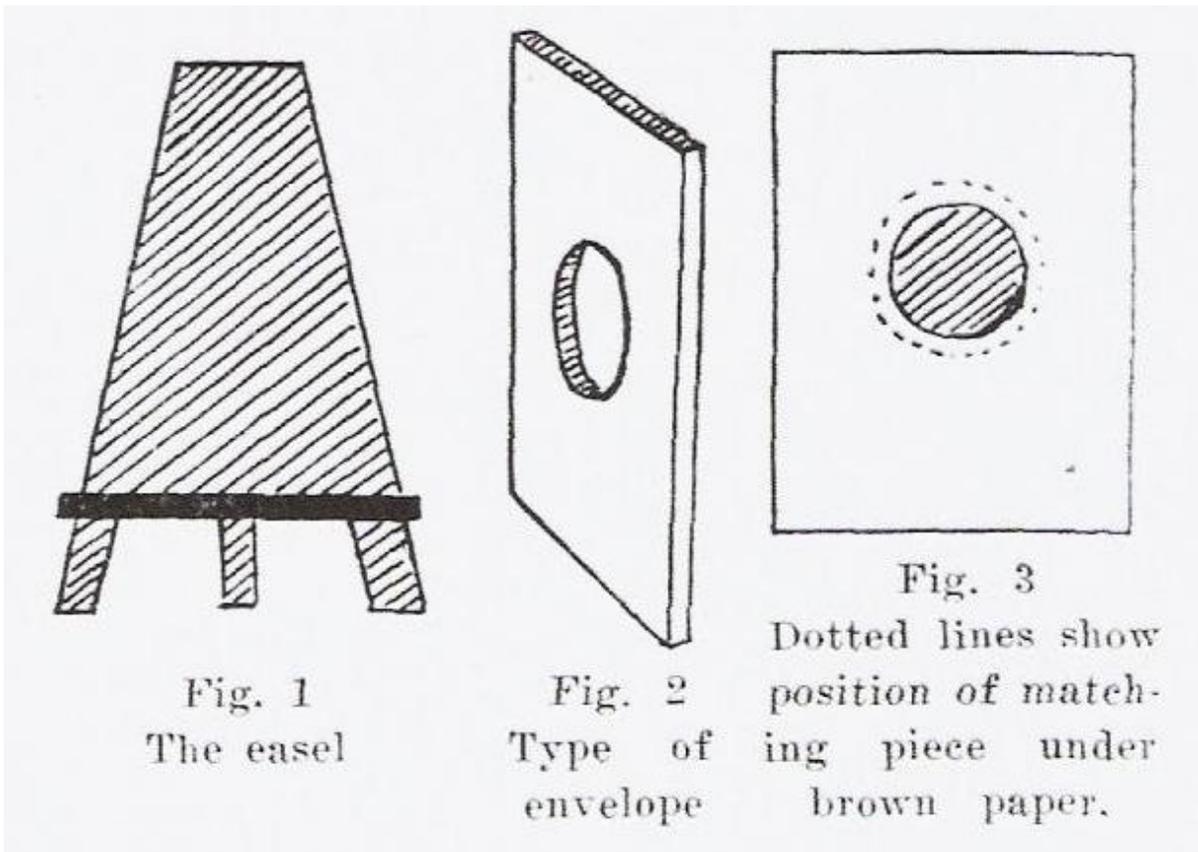
10. Slates are now picked up from the table, the flap being left on the velvet bag.

11. Spectator ties the ribbon round slates, and ultimately the message is disclosed.

I have simply described the procedure for obtaining the desired message—a message which incidentally can be rather long. In using this effect where the audience has been small, I have asked the person whose initials are written on the message side to choose a color. The resultant message has read something like this; "Red was the color chosen by" followed by the person's initials. This is a small point but it has a psychological value.

SECOND METHOD WITH ENVELOPE

The next method is one which I think is an improvement on the usual flap and open envelope idea. The idea I refer to is the effect where the operator has a brown paper envelope just large enough to hold the slate. In front of this envelope or bag, a hole is cut out so that when the slate is inside, a part of it can be seen through the hole.



The slate used is the usual type of flap slate and one side of the flap is covered with the same kind of paper as that used in the making of the envelope; but when the slate is withdrawn the flap is left behind and because of the paper covering on the flap the inside of the envelope seems to be empty.

The improvement I have effected is to have a bag with two holes one in each side, much in the manner of a gramophone record holder (see Fig. 2).

The other requirements are a small wooden easel, a slate and a flap to fit it.

Presuming that you have made an envelope capable of accommodating the slate, and the holes having been made in each side, the flap of the slate is inserted. The operator now marks on the flap with a pencil, the position of the hole in the envelope in relation to the flap when this latter rests on the bottom of the envelope. A piece of paper similar to that used in the construction of the envelope is taken, and a hole of the same shape and size cut from its center; this is now placed over the flap and the hole adjusted to the pencil markings. The type of easel that is used is illustrated in Fig. 1. I suggest that it be made in ply-wood and covered with an imitation wood paper. This paper can be obtained from your Magic Dealer. A piece of this grained paper is then taken and cut to the same contour, but its size overall should be about half an inch greater.

The method should now be obvious; the piece of grained paper is stuck on to the flap with secotine, the loose piece of paper is stuck on the flap too. If the flap is now dropped into the envelope, and the envelope and flap placed on the easel, it will seem that you are looking through both holes and seeing an empty envelope resting on a small stand. It is of course essential that the graining should run in the same direction on both easel and flap.

SLATE OF THOUGHT

The performer introduces to the audience a slate, which may be examined, a red cellophane envelope, some colored chinks and a deck of cards. On the table stands a glass. The slate is then initialled; these initials are placed *in* the corner on each side. The patter theme is that of photographing thoughts. Like the ordinary photographer you need a dark room in which such thoughts can be developed. This is represented by the red cellophane envelope. The slate represents the plate and in order to present an emulsified surface for the reception of the thoughts, the operator covers the whole of one side (allowing the initials in the corner to still show) with white chalk. The slate in this condition is now slipped into the red cellophane envelope; the initials can be seen by the audience and both sides appear blank. The slate in envelope is now stood on top of the glass so that it is completely isolated.

The performer now takes a piece of black chalk and a piece of red chalk and slips them inside the envelope.

A spectator is asked to select a card from the pack and to concentrate upon it for a few moments. The performer picks up the envelope, tipping the chinks out. The slate is then withdrawn, and in the appropriate color is seen written the name of the selected card.

The requirements for this effect are one red cellophane envelope large enough to contain the slate. As a suggestion it is better that a brown paper envelope be made first and then most of the sides cut away so that windows are left. In these windows the red cellophane can be fitted and attached with adhesive paper. This envelope is much stronger than one made simply of cellophane. The slate used should have a flap to fit it, one corner of this flap being cut diagonally.

The other requisites are a deck of cards, some pieces of black, white and red chalk, and a glass. The necessary preparations are as follows:

The flap must first be covered with white chalk, the name of a red card is then written in red chalk on the white surface. In order to prevent any smudging I suggest that the whole be sprayed with "Fixatif." The flap is now

placed message side down on the table. The red cellophane envelope is laid on top of the flap and then on top of this is placed the slate itself. Regarding the slate, it is advisable to lightly pencil the position of the flap—or rather where the flap is cut away. The glass is placed on the table just in front of the slate.

The card whose name corresponds with that written on the slate must be available for forcing. In this respect *I should like to emphasise that no doubt should be left in the mind of the audience that the choice of the card was other than haphazard.* I therefore leave the operator his individual method for obtaining this part of the effect: The pieces of chalk are dropped into the glass.

In presenting the effect the performer hands the slate for examination ; while this is being done, chalks are tipped out of the glass on to the table. Taking back the slate the performer draws diagonal lines across one corner on each side of the slate, these corresponding with the lightly pencilled marks (these latter need not be more than two dots, providing they form sufficient guide).

Asking two spectators for their initials, the performer writes them in the marked off corners. He next coats one side of *the slate with* white chalk, leaving the initials in the corner untouched. The slate is now placed on the table, white side down, with one hand, while at the same time the other hand removes the red cellophane envelope, so that the flap is covered with the slate. If the timing is accurate the flap will not be glimpsed by the audience. Care must be taken in putting the slate down to see that the initialled corner on the slate corresponds with the position of the cut out corner of the flap. Having shown the cellophane envelope the performer picks up the slate and the flap together, being careful, of course, that the side against which the flap rests is kept away from the audience. In this position the slate and flap are inserted in the envelope. Now because of an elementary scientific principle, the slate inside the envelope can be shown on both sides; the color of the cellophane neutralizes the color of the chalk on the slate so that the writing is invisible to the audience. The initials being on a normal black surface show up distinctly, and it has occurred to me that as an extra piece of chicanery the initials might be put on with the red chalk, as the red on the dark surface of the slate would be visible through the cellophane while that on the white surface would not.

The effect, apart from the forcing of the card is now finished and the build-up towards the desired climax rests with each individual operator.

THE GHOST OF LITTLE WILLIE

Now for a slate effect in which two messages are obtained on one slate. The first version of this original effect of my own, appeared in the *Magic Circular* for May, 1931. It appeared later in the summer number of *The Jinx*, 1939, under the title of "The Satchel." This is the effect in a later form.

The operator picks up a satchel, and opening it, withdraws a number of books, a slate, a piece of chalk and a duster. The patter theme runs along the lines that the satchel belonged to one little Willie, since departed, and how now, strange things happen inside the satchel. Cleaning the slate the operator marks it on one side with a given name or initials. Whilst this is going on the satchel can be examined by a member of the audience. Receiving the satchel again, the operator places the slate and piece of chalk inside it. The satchel is then hung by its strap on the back of a chair. Advancing with the books, four or five in number, one is selected by a member of the audience. The selector of the book is then asked to open it where he pleases and to tell the operator the number of the pages at which it is opened. We will suppose that the numbers are 20 and 21. One of these numbers is selected and the holder of the book is asked to count to the word on that page. The operator now calls upon the satchel and Little Willie to manifest themselves by writing on the slate, in chalk, the word selected. The slate is withdrawn from the satchel and the operator shows that the word has been written on the slate. The holder of the book says that the word is not the one selected; it is, however, remarks the spectator, "the word next to that selected." "What a pity," says the operator, "But then Willie could never count; let's give him another chance." The slate is cleaned and replaced in the satchel. After the necessary interval it is withdrawn and the correct word found written on the slate.

Although only an ordinary flap slate is used in the making of this effect, it will be noted that *two messages* are produced instead of the usual one; also that there is no doubt in the minds of the spectators that both the slate and the satchel are free from preparation, as both articles are passed to members of the audience at some time or other during the presentation of the effect.

The requirements for the effect are as follows. One school satchel, a flap slate, a piece of chalk and a number of books, one of which is Stanley Collins' *Transcendental Book of Poems*. This latter is capable of forcing two words, "dear" and "one" in the most simple manner. On every page, on which a poem appears, the numbers of that page and its opposite are the numbers at which those particular words appear in the poem. In making the necessary preparation for presenting the effect, the word "clear" is written on one side of

the slate. The word “one” is written on one side of the flap and this side of the flap is placed against the writing on the slate, so that the slate now appears blank on both sides. The books, slate, and chalk together with a piece of material (an ink-stained handkerchief might be used) are placed inside the satchel, which is slung by its strap on the back of a chair. Everything is now ready for presentation, which is as follows :—

The operator removes contents from satchel and passes this latter for examination. The books and duster are placed on table or chair whilst slate and chalk are held. Asking for a name or someone’s initials, the operator writes this on the non-flap side of the slate. Taking satchel back from the spectator, slate is placed inside and satchel re-placed on chair. The book of poems is then forced in the usual equivocal way, and then the opening of the book wherever the holder of the book chooses, results in the choice of the word “one,” the word “dear” preceding it. The slate is later removed from the satchel the flap being left behind. It is handed to spectator ostensibly for him to read what is written there namely the word “dear,” but also *so that he can handle the slate and convince himself that it is unprepared.* The word being proved wrong the operator takes the duster and erases it from the slate which is then replaced inside the satchel, but is placed behind the flap. A few moments elapse and the slate and flap are withdrawn as one by the right hand, ample cover afforded by the satchel allowing the operator’s fingers to adjust the flap into the slate. The word “one” now appears to be written on the slate. Simultaneously with the withdrawal of the slate, the satchel is turned over with the other hand, allowing chalk to drop to the floor, and without audible comment calling attention to the fact that the satchel is empty.

* * * * *

Most slate effects, with the exception of these in which the operator is obtaining a broad effect, are more suitable for intimate work; the effect just explained is one, and so is the following, I call it:

COHESIVE COLORS

Where the audience is small and everyone known to each other (small Masonics are a splendid example) the effect is one that “causes talk.” Let me first give a description.

Two slates are passed for the closest examination. Whilst this is being done a member of the audience is requested to write on a card the name of some famous person, past or present. This having been done the card is sealed within a small envelope which is then placed in a prominent position for everyone to see that it is not tampered with during the course of the effect.

The operator now collects the slates. One is placed on his table, the other being retained. On this latter the operator places a number of colored chalks which up to now have been lying on his table. Advancing to a spectator the operator asks him to take the slate and to choose one of the pieces of chalk. This having been done, the operator takes back the remaining pieces of chalk and drops them into his pocket. The slate on the table is now picked up by the operator, who also takes in his hand a piece of white chalk. "I am going to print a number of letters in a haphazard manner on this slate, and I wish you to do the same," says the operator addressing the person who has the other slate. Both sides of both slates are filled, the operator's with *white* letters and the spectator's with *coloured* letters. The operator places his slate on the table and takes the spectator's slate. "This," he says, "is an experiment in which I shall attempt to prove that matter can neither be created nor destroyed." Then, with a duster, he erases the chalk marks on both slates, so that every side is now blank. The slates are now placed face to face and elastic bands slipped around them. In this condition they are handed to the person who wrote on the card in the envelope. He is asked to hold them high in the air, so that everyone may see that there is no tampering with the slates.

The operator now recapitulates what has been done and says that he will now try to resuscitate on one of the slates the letters necessary for the spelling of the name on the card. The person is asked to say what he wrote on the card. This having been done, the operator opens the envelope and removes the card, passing it to another member of the audience for confirmation. The elastic band is now removed from the slates, and this name is revealed written on the inside of one of the slates, in *alternate letters of white and the selected coloured chalk!*

As the effect is of a rather complicated nature I am going to summarise in the briefest manner what has happened.

1. Slate examined.
2. Name written on card and card then placed in envelope, this latter being sealed and placed in prominent position.
3. Slate handed to spectator, who is also asked to select coloured chalk.
4. Operator takes piece of white chalk and the other slate.
5. Operator and spectator both print letters haphazardly on both sides of their respective slates.
6. Both slates cleaned on all sides, placed together and the elastic bands slipped round them.
7. Name revealed by writer, confirmed by opening envelope.
8. Elastic bands removed from slates, and selected name revealed in alternating letters of white and the selected coloured chalk.

The requirements are as follows. Two slates of similar size, a loose flap capable of fitting either slate, a small card approximately 2 ¼" x 3 ½" , two envelopes of the wages type which are of sufficient size to accommodate the card, a pencil and some pieces of coloured chalk. May I here emphasise that *good quality* chalks should be used. Chalks of the cheaper grades are of little use as the colours are not definite enough to be identified at even a short distance. Supposing that six colours are to be used, six duplicate sticks will be required; from each of these about a quarter is broken off at the attenuated end. Next, six sticks of white chalk are taken and an equivalent amount broken off from each piece. The short pieces of coloured chalk are placed against the long pieces of white chalk and a piece of adhesive tape wrapped round the two parts so that a stick of chalk is formed one end of which is white and the other coloured. To facilitate handling at a later stage it is advisable to shorten the length of white chalk so that the proportion of white to coloured instead of being three to one becomes two to one. The remaining requisites are two large elastic bands, a duster and a small box. The box I use is a chromium plated cigarette box capable of holding one hundred cigarettes.

To prepare for the effect, several letters are printed haphazardly in white chalk on one side of the flap. The flap is now placed towards the rear of the operator's table, lettered side down. The slates with the rubber bands around them are laid on top of the flap. Taking one of the envelopes, a small window is cut, size 2 ½ " x 1 ¾" on the address side. The other envelope is then sealed, torn open, and placed in a crumpled condition in the operator's left hand trousers pocket. In one end of the cigarette box are the ordinary sticks of coloured chalk and at the other end are the faked sticks. On top of the chalk the card and envelope are laid. The pencil and the duster are kept in an accessible pocket. Everything is now ready for the presentation, which is as follows.

Picking up the slates, the operator removes the bands, which are dropped on to the table. The slates are passed for examination. Taking the card from the box and the pencil from his pocket, the operator requests someone to write the necessary name on the card. Whilst this is being done, he takes the window envelope from the box, the window naturally being kept hidden from the audience. Advancing to the spectator who has the card the operator requests him to keep the name hidden by turning the card over, and to insert it in the envelope. As this is done the operator is holding the envelope in left hand, window to palm, the thumb and third finger pinching the sides of the envelope to allow easy entry of the card. The operator now lifts the envelope to his face so that he can damp the flap with his tongue. This having been done the envelope is turned round, the operator rubbing the flap of the envelope

with the fingers of the right hand. (This a purely natural action when sealing an envelope.) The window faces the operator and a glance gives him the name written on the card. The envelope is now propped up against some object so that it can be seen by everyone throughout the course of the effect.

The person who is holding the slates is asked to keep one and hand the other to the operator. This he does, and the chinks are taken from the box and the spectator with the slate is requested to choose one. (In order that no one can suggest that the spectator was influenced in his choice, I suggest that the six chinks be placed on the spectator's slate, and whilst the operator turns his back for a moment the spectator picks whichever color he pleases.) The spectator is now requested to write some letters on the slate that he holds, the operator drawing attention to the fact that he, also, is going to print some letters in white chalk. As he mentions this he takes from the box the faked stick of chalk which bears a color at one end similar to that taken by the spectator. The operator now covers one side of the slate that he holds with letters in white, and holds it up. He also asks the spectator to show the audience how he is getting along. This serves an important purpose, as it enables the operator to see the characteristics of the spectator's printing.

The slates are turned over and both the spectator and operator apparently commence to print more letters on the other sides of the slates. Actually the operator prints in alternate letters of white and coloured chalk the name that was written on the card in the envelope. This is easily done by using the faked piece of chalk, alternate swiveling of the stick producing the desired result with the minimum of effort and without any appreciable break in the hand movements. When using the coloured end, the operator should, if possible, try to imitate the characteristics of the spectator's printing, as this greatly heightens the ultimate effect. If the name is a short one, the simulation of printing more letters should be obtained by the operator pressing his fingernails instead of the chalk against the surface of the slate. Both operator and spectator having finished their task, the operator places his slate, name side down on top of the flap lying on the table.

Now comes that part of the effect when it is mentioned that "matter can neither be created nor destroyed." At this point the operator takes back the spectator's slate and rests this also on the table at the side of the other slate. The slate with the name on it is picked up together with the flap. In this state it be shown to have on *both sides some letters in white chalk*. Taking the duster, both sides are cleaned, and the slate is then replaced on table, flap downwards.

The spectator's slate is then picked up and is also cleaned and shown to be blank on both sides. Picking up the slate from the table, but this time leaving the flap behind, it is placed on top of the slate, already in operator's hand. Elastic bands are placed round both slates, and in this state they are handed to a spectator to hold.

Whilst this is taking place the operator has obtained possession, in his left hand, of the crumpled envelope. With the right hand the envelope containing the card is taken, care of course being taken that the window is not revealed. The spectator who wrote the name is asked to state what it is. This he does, and the operator impresses on the audience that this is the first time during the course of the effect that it is known what has been written. The envelope is now placed in the left hand (which it will be remembered holds the crumpled envelope) whilst the right hand tears one end open; the card is then removed and handed to another spectator for confirmation. The left hand at the same time crumples the faked envelope into a ball and in a casual way apparently drops it upon the floor. Actually the faked envelope is retained and the unprepared one dropped. This little subterfuge is well worth while, as, if there should be any suspicious member of the audience, he is sure, at the first opportunity, to seize hold of the envelope and examine it. Such unrequested examination is far better for the reputation of the operator. The name having been confirmed, all that remains is for the elastic bands to be removed and for the operator to reap the reward of an insoluble mystery. The following is a summary of the moves:—

1. Bands removed from slates, the latter being passed for examination.
2. Card and pencil handed to member of the audience, each with the request that he write the name of some person past or present.
3. Envelope picked up, window to palm. Card inserted face down and envelope sealed. Operator sights name.
4. One slate taken by operator, and spectator with other slate is offered choice of coloured chalk.
5. Operator takes faked stick of chalk from box, color at one end corresponding to that chosen by spectator.
6. Operator and spectator each print letters with their respective chalks, on one side of slate they hold.
7. Slates turned over and operator prints name in alternate letters of white and coloured chalk. Slate then placed on top of flap on table.
8. Operator *takes slate from spectator and* places it on table.
9. Operator picks up his slate together with flap, cleans both sides and replaces it on the table. Spectator's slate is also cleaned.

10. Operator's slate picked up from table without flap and laid on top of spectator's slate. Elastic bands slipped around them.

11. Envelope opened, card passed out for confirmation, envelope switched and thrown away.

Many fingers have gone to the making of this pie. In one of the early books Annemann outlined the basic part of the effect and in so doing gave thanks to A1 Baker for adapting a medium's slate artifice. In a copy of *The Jinx*, Norman Ashworth thought of the spectator using coloured chalk and the operator white, the name appearing in coloured chalk only. In a letter to the Editor of *The Jinx*, I pointed out that the result was illogical as there seemed no reason for the use of white chalk by the operator. In the same letter I outlined the effect described above in which *the name* appeared in *alternate* letters of white and colour, thus producing a logical ending. In his reply Annemann agreed and I surmised that in the novelty of having a colour selected, the logical conclusion of the effect had been overlooked.

I should next like to give a presentation for the Thayer or Shannon Slates. I call it—

THE FAMOUS MATHEMATICIAN

The performer, remarking that he wishes to attempt a mathematical problem, takes a paper pad, pencil, and a pair of slates. These latter are handed for examination. Approaching a member of the audience the performer asks for a three-figure number. This is written down on the pad by the performer. Two other spectators are asked to give three-figure numbers; these are written underneath the first. The pad is then handed to a fourth spectator with a request that he totals the three lines of figures, about an inch below the last row. The spectator then tears the page from the pad, and he is further requested to tear off and keep the total, and hand the performer the three lines of figures.

The slates are then shown to be devoid of any writing. The piece of paper with the figures on is now burnt, the ashes being allowed to fall on the surface of one of the slates. The other slate is placed on top and an elastic band placed round them; the slates are then handed to a spectator to hold.

The performer remarks that he hopes to raise the shades of a famous mathematician who will give the answer to the sum which members of the audience have supplied.

After a brief wait the spectator is asked to remove the elastic band from the slates, the latter then being taken by the performer. The top slate is lifted and on it appears the words: "Isaac Newton" (or some other well-known mathematician). The slate is then handed for examination. "What," says the performer to the spectator who added the sum, "did you make the answer?" The spectator gives the total. "Amazing," says the performer, "because that is just the number written on the slate." As this is said, the performer flicks off the pieces of ash, shows the number, and hands this slate too for examination.

The requirements are a pair of Thayer or Shannon slates, a pad of paper, pencil and a large elastic band.

The preparation is as follows. The number which appears on the slate is of course forced. We will assume it is to be 1641. The flap is released from its locking device in one of the slates and this number is written on one side. (If I am showing before a group of people likely to include mathematicians, I always write down about three wrong numbers, crossing each out, and finally putting down the total with one figure altered. This "dig" is always appreciated.)

On one surface of the slate the name of the mathematician is written. A piece of paper from the pad is burnt and the ashes dropped on top of the name. The flap is replaced with the figure surface towards the name surface, and locked. This slate we will call A. The other slate, B, is unprepared. It is essential that some small mark of identification should be placed upon the slates for the performer's guidance. The slates, together with the remaining accessories, are placed on a chair or table and the performer is ready to begin.

The slates are first handed for examination and the performer goes to the first spectator who is asked to whisper a three-figure number. We will suppose he says 345. The performer allows him to see it written down. The next spectator is approached and asked to whisper a number; this time the spectator does not see it written down. The performer simply puts under the first three figures the number 654, which has the effect of raising the first total to 999. (This procedure of raising the total to 999 is adopted in every case unless the first spectator himself gives that number—in that case the operator goes to only *one* other spectator.) Going to a third spectator, another number is requested. Whatever is given the operator writes down 642, which of course brings the total to 1641. (As the spectators are normally sitting and the operator standing, the boldness of the procedure makes it undetectable.) A fourth spectator is asked to total the figures, tear the paper, keep the answer, and hand the performer the figures.

The slates are then taken back and the piece of paper burnt. Not only does this procedure help to make the effect, but it also destroys some incriminating evidence. The ashes are dropped on to slate B. Slate A is placed on top, and the flap released. The slates are encircled with the elastic band and all that remains is for the performer to build up the necessary climax.

It will of course be realised that the above effect can be obtained with a loose-fitting flap, with the consequent non-examination of the slates.

Another Presentation with Thayer or Shannon Slates

can be obtained with the use of a deck of E.S.P. (Extra Sensory Perception) cards. I think it was in 1937 that Professor Rhine of Duke University introduced his printed cards, designed for the purpose of testing the extra sensory perceptiveness of individuals. Twenty-five of these cards go to a pack and there are five designs. Experiments were also carried on in England under the auspices of the University of London Council for Psychological Investigation. For these experiments our distinguished member, Mr. Harry Price, designed for production by Messrs. Waddington's, a pack known as "Telepatha." These, whilst keeping to five character designs, are far superior in quality to the Rhine-Zenea cards and are to be recommended. The use of these cards is a welcome change from ordinary playing cards.

For this presentation remove the flap from a Shannon or Thayer slate. Take one of the cards from the pack and draw the pattern of the card on the slate. Place the card on top face towards the drawing, and replace the flap. In presentation the two slates are examined and the pack of E.S.P. cards shown; they are spread on a tray, and a spectator, without looking at the card, is asked to take one and drop it face down on the non-flap slate. The flap slate is placed on top, flap released, and the elastic band placed around slates which are then given into the custody of a spectator. When the band is removed and the card turned over, the audience see for the first time what it is. It is shown that a similar design has appeared magically on the slate. The fact that there is obviously no force of card and the fact that the slates are out of the performer's possession makes this very effective.

Another method

I now come to a method in which two, slates are used with one flap and writing is obtained on one surface of each slate. At the same time the flap is completely eliminated at the end of the effect, the slates being able to stand examination. An appropriate presentation would be the "Great Mathematician," or the selection of an article or card, descriptions of which can be spread over the surfaces of the slates.

The requirements are two slates with the common fitting flap. One slate we will call A and the other B. In addition to the slates and the various articles required for the force, a tray slightly larger than the flap is required. The preparation of the slates is as follows: On one side of slate A chalk the figure 1 in the top left hand corner; this side of the slate is then filled with one of the messages. On slate B, chalk the figure 3 in the top left hand corner; and then fill in this side of the slate with the remainder of the message. Place the flap on side marked 1 of slate A. This slate is now placed on top of slate B, which is message side up. The manipulation of the slates to achieve the effect is as follows :

The slates are picked up with the right hand and are casually shown. They are then placed in the crook of the left arm and held with the left hand, the surfaces of the slates tilting slightly upwards and away from the audience. Taking a piece of chalk with his right hand the performer writes a figure 1 in the top left-hand corner of the top slate (really one side of the flap). This slate and flap are now gripped with the right hand at the bottom left-hand corner, lifted up and both sides shown. (In doing this the remaining slate must be held so that no glimpse of writing on its upper surface can be seen.) It is then turned over and replaced on slate B ; it should actually be replaced with an overlap of about two inches and then slid, this action allowing the flap to arrive on the written surface of B without any “talking.” A figure 2 is now chalked on the top left-hand corner of slate A. During this action the left arm has allowed the slates to adopt a downward tilt so that the faces of the slates can be seen. Slate A is now slid off and placed under slate B, this latter because of the flap covering it, now appears blank. Care of course must be taken that the writing on the underside of slate A is kept well away from the audience. The operator now chalks a figure 3 on the top left-hand corner of the flap covering slate B. After this the slate and flap are picked up as one by the left-hand bottom corner, shown on both sides and then turned over, but this time, instead of the flap being allowed to fall, the left hand slides slate A along and holds it on the left-hand side between the first and second, third and fourth fingers. Slate B, which has just been turned over, is held, flap and all, between the thumb and first finger. A figure 4 is now chalked in the top lefthand corner with the right hand. Slate B is now lifted and shown once more and is placed *under* slate A.

The position of the slates should be this: Slate A, side marked 2 on top, the under-side marked 1 and bearing message. Slate B, 4 side up, under-side marked 3 and bearing message, covered with flap at bottom.

Now, holding the slates at each end, the performer approaches table or chair; the slates are momentarily laid on this object and the flap allowed to drop. The hands now move to form two sides of a triangle, the flap forming the base (a card castle with slates) the message being inside. The foregoing moves will come quite naturally if the instructions are read with the slate in hand.

When the object has been forced it is placed on the tray together with a piece of chalk, the tray then being placed inside the "tent" formed by the two slates. The tray in this position covers the flap, therefore the performer when reaching the climax of the effect can quite safely allow a member of the audience to step forward and pick up the slates.

FRED HOCKING'S SLATE MYSTERY

One of the most ingenious uses of the flap that I have seen is in an effect originated by Mr. Fred Hocking. With his permission I will describe it.

The performer offers a slate for examination and it can be marked if necessary, on both sides. The performer now tells the audience that he is going to write on the slate some numbers which he wants them to give him, but before doing so, they can choose which side of the slate they would like him to use. This having been decided upon, the performer asks for a three-figure number. This is written on the slate in view of the audience. Another two sets of numbers are requested and these, when given, are written underneath the first.

Under the last three figures the performer draws a line across the slate. The slate is now given to a member of the audience, with the request that he holds it face downwards. After the performer has explained that he is going to obtain a magical answer to the sum, the assistant holding the slate turns it over and reveals that the answer has magically appeared in the space allotted for the total.

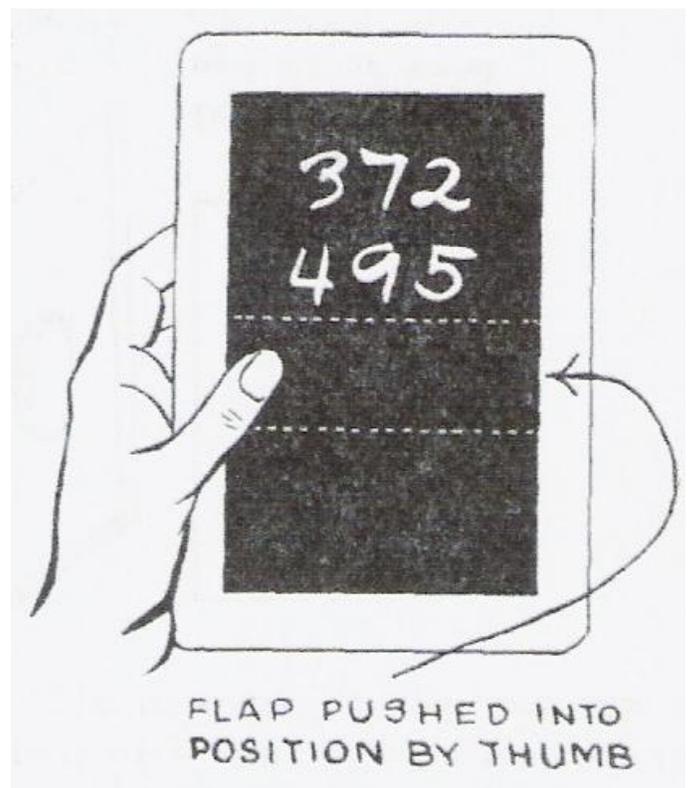
Before describing the working of the effect, I should like to emphasise the stringent conditions under which the effect is obtained. First, the slate is subjected to the closest examination. Secondly, the numbers are given by disinterested members of the audience, *i.e.*, there is no collusion between the spectators and performer. Thirdly, the audience sees the numbers as they are written. Fourthly, the slate can again be subjected to the closest scrutiny at the end of the effect.

To present this effect the performer requires one slate, which should be of the silicate type. Supposing that the size of the slate surface is 7in. x 9in., a flap 7in. x 2in. is required. The only other requisite is a piece of chalk. Prior to presentation the flap should be placed in an easily accessible part of the performer's clothing.

In presenting the effect the performer offers the slate for examination and due marking. When the audience have decided which side of the slate shall be used, the performer returns to the stage with the slate. On his way, the small flap is added to the chosen side—a by no means difficult move—and slid to one end. The first number is requested, and holding the slate so that the surface can be seen, it is written across the top of the slate. (The flap at this point is at the opposite end, *i.e.*, the bottom of the slate. The fact that a dull black slate is used with accompanying lack of high light and shadow, conceals the presence of the flap.) The next three figures are requested, and these, too, are written in full view of the audience, under the first line. The next three figures are requested, but at this juncture the performer stands facing the audience with the slate in front of him. The slate is tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees with the written numbers facing the performer.

The performer's left thumb slides the flap into the position which the third set of figures would normally occupy, thus leaving the *total* space *uncovered*. The performer hears the third set of figures given and mentally works out the total of the three sets. At this moment the performer remarks that by the way the numbers have been given haphazard, there can be no question of confederates, etc. As he says this the total, with as little hand movement as possible, is written in the total space.

The flap is then slipped back with the left thumb and the performer says: "Oh, by the way, what was the third set of figures?" The number is repeated and the performer writes it underneath the others, the audience being allowed to see this. A line is drawn across the top of the flap and a spectator is invited on the stage to assist. The performer explains that he wants him to hold the slate in front of him, one hand on each



side of the slate, the back of the slate towards the audience. In passing the slate to the assistant the flap is stolen with the right hand, and although it cannot be palmed in the strict sense, it is not difficult to cover. This flap is disposed of in the performer's *profonde* and the effect is now finished from the performer's view-point.

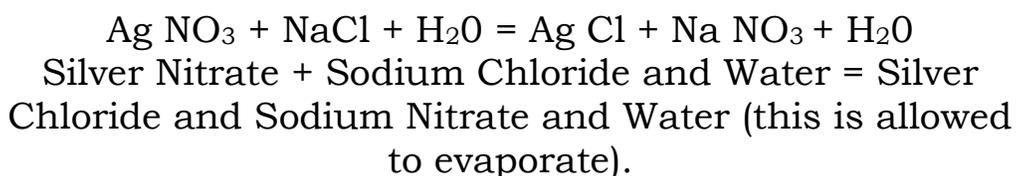
There is one point that I should like to mention. There are many who, whilst their arithmetic will stand up to all normal requirements, does not function so well when operating during show conditions. The mental addition of three sets of three figure numbers may seem to be a stumbling block; the effect, however, is in no way spoiled by using two-figure numbers, and I am sure that I am betraying no confidences when I retail the fact that when Mr. Hocking worked this effect before Circle audiences in those unforgettable days at Anderton's, his stage-managing partner in crime, Mr. Ivey, stood at the side of the stage taking a note of the numbers as they were given, and after totaling them wrote the total in large figures on a board for Mr. Hocking to see in a quick glance. This subterfuge is to be commended as it leaves the performer free from cross-thinking.

Section III

METHODS OF OBTAINING WRITING ON A SLATE BY CHEMICAL MEANS

There is nothing particularly new about the use of chemicals for producing writings or drawings on slates. Robinson's book¹ tells of a method used by fraudulent mediums some forty-five years ago; it is this: The message to be produced on the slate is written with one end of a silver nitrate (Ag NO₃) pencil. (Particular care must be taken by the operator in handling this chemical as it is a dangerous caustic.)

The operator now breathes upon the message he has written; this has the effect of making it invisible. If now, in the action of cleaning the slate, a sponge saturated with saline solution—common salt and water—is wiped across the surface on which the message is written, and evaporation of the liquid allowed to take place the message will duly appear as though written with a slate pencil. This is the result of a chemical reaction, which is as follows:

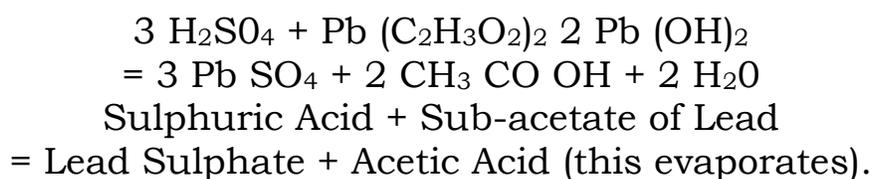


Continuous exposure to light will cause a change in the color of the precipitate—it will tend to turn violet. This fact which is rather important, is omitted by both Robinson and Hull* in their descriptions of the effect. Because writing done with a slate pencil, or as in this an imitation of such writing, is not easily visible from a distance, it follows that this method is only practicable for a small room. The séance parlour with its ruby light would be ideal and the resulting effect very good.

¹ *Spirit Slate Writing and Kindred Phenomena*

* *Original Slate Secrets*

Another method in which a chemical reaction produces good results appeared in *The Sphinx* (1929, page 442). The two chemicals required to produce the effect are both poisons. One is sulphuric acid (H₂SO₄) which, as most people are aware, is one of the most corrosive of liquid acids, the merest drop burning into most substances it touches, including human flesh. The other chemical is sub-acetate of lead [Pb (C₂H₃O₂)₂ 2Pb (OH)₂], This latter is added to water and used in solution form. The message which is to appear is first written in sulphuric acid on the surface of the slate. The contributor in *The Sphinx* mentions the use of a camelhair brush as a medium for the application, but I am afraid the operator would need a good stock of such brushes. The action of the acid would render them useless. The best thing with which to apply the acid is a glass stirring rod, and the application should be done with the minimum of acid. When the acid has eaten into the slate, the latter will appear at a very short distance to be free from any preparation. If now, in the action of cleaning the surface of the slate a sponge saturated with the sub-acetate of lead is wiped across the treated surface, the message will, when evaporation has taken place, appear as though written in white chalk. The following is the chemical reaction:



This method is quite effective owing to the resultant message apparently being written with chalk and the fact that the plate is shown freely on both sides prior to washing.

In both of these methods, as water is the base of the washing liquid, evaporation is naturally slow. This means that the operator must play for time. Another drawback in both methods is that the slates treated can be used *once only*, because of the injury done to the surfaces of the slates by the corrosion.

The modern chemical method which has been publicised by Hull* is, paradoxically enough, one in which no chemical reaction is brought about for the ultimate effect. In this method the writing is done with specially prepared chalk on one side of the slate. The treatment of the chalk is to cause it to “fix.” It must be realised that when the message is written it is fully *visible*. Only when in the action of cleaning the slate the washing liquid is applied does it become *invisible*. Thus, the treated side of the slate can only be shown to be free from writing when in a “washed” condition; subsequent descriptions of effects will show that this is no drawback.

**Original Slate Secrets. Hull. Thirty (One-Man) Mind Heading Mysteries. U. F. Grant*

In his book Hull, while not revealing the formula of his own chemical chalk, writes: “But I earnestly request that readers will test out the contemporary formula . . . ”

- (1) Liquid A. Mucilage 1 part. Alcohol 1 part.
- (2) Liquid B. Benzole C.P. or Naptha.
- (3) Liquid C. Carbon Tetrachloride.

The first mixture is used to treat the chalk, whilst the liquids B and C are used for washing purposes. These latter will be recognized as highly volatile solvents. Benzole and Naptha are definitely out of the question, as Hull quite rightly remarks because of their inflammability. But as Carbon Tetrachloride is non-inflammable it serves the purpose. (There are other non-inflammable solvents sold under proprietary names, such as “Thawpit,” the great drawback, however, with all this group is their odour. Although Carbon Tetrachloride can be deodourised to a certain extent it cannot be made *odourless*.)

Whilst recommending the use of the “Hull” outfit it is doubtful if it can be obtained, because of the prevailing war conditions.

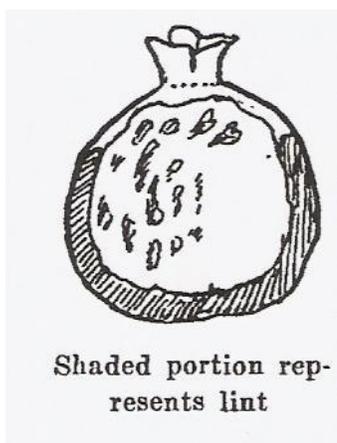
I have tested the contemporary formula given above, and by using a good gum and alcohol for treating the chalk, and Carbon Tetrachloride for washing, have obtained very good results.

To prepare the slate take a piece of chalk and dip the end into the alcohol and gum mixture, allowing it to soak well, then remove and wipe off excess moisture. With the chalk in this condition start writing the message on the slate. As it is applied it will not look a bit like chalk writing, but after a minute or so most of the alcohol evaporates, leaving the chalk and mucilage. This shows up in exactly the same way that ordinary chalk would, especially if written on a silicate slate. More applications of the mixture to the chalk will

be needed according to the length of the message. If when the whole message is dry a silk sponge saturated with Carbon Tetrachloride is wiped over the surface the operator can test for himself that the message disappears whilst the treated surface of the slate is in a wet state.

Before describing some effects made possible by this method, I should like to make some remarks regarding the accessories necessary for accomplishing the effects in the most efficient manner.

First the sponge used should be non-abrasive. The one I use myself is made by placing a small piece of rubber sponge on a layer of cotton lint. Both are then wrapped round with a piece of china silk, the ends of which are sewn together (Fig. 1). This article fulfills the condition of non-abrasiveness whilst retaining the normal qualities of a sponge.



Secondly, the container for the Carbon Tetrachloride should be made of glass and have a small lid. This latter is necessary owing to the volatile nature of the chemical. The Woolworth stores sell a glass butter dish with a “beatl” lid which is ideal for the purpose. As, however, from the point of view of the audience the operator should do no more than pick up a sponge and clean the slate I think that the container should be out of sight. I therefore have with me a wicker waste-paper basket ten inches high. Two inches from the bottom I have fixed a shelf, and on this I rest the glass dish. When the sponge is in the dish it is an easy matter for the operator, with one hand, to knock off the lid and remove the sponge. The action, to the audience, is that the sponge has been removed from the basket. I am stressing this point because I have seen some magicians make a parade of removing the sponge from a *visible* container. On one occasion I actually witnessed the liquid being poured from a bottle into a bowl, the sponge then being dipped into the liquid!

There is just one other point. I have remarked about the volatile nature of the chemical; its drying action on a visible surface of a slate is evidence to the acute observer that the usual medium, water, has not been used for cleaning. To obviate such suspicion I suggest a smaller piece of sponge be attached to the silk sponge with a few inches of strong thread. This sponge is then dampened with water. The silk sponge is placed inside the dish, the ordinary sponge being allowed to hang outside (Fig. 2). The lid is then placed on the dish, the thread offering little obstruction.

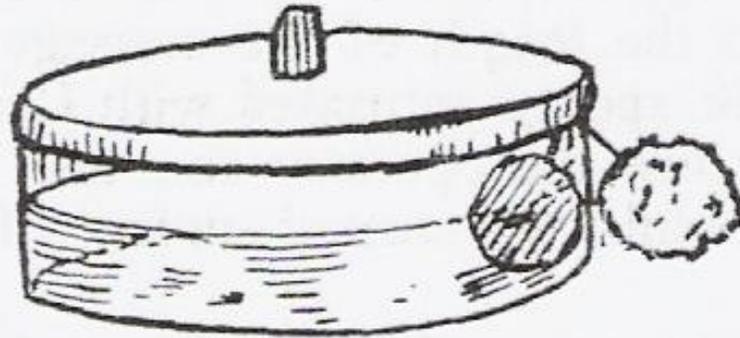


Fig. 2. The container for the Carbon Tetrachloride.

In cleaning the slate both sponges are picked up as one by the operator, one of the fingers separating the two surfaces. The treated side of the slate is now washed with the chemical, and the untreated side is washed with water. Thus, only the message side will dry quickly. The two sponges are quite easily handled and the fact that the hand has a natural excuse for continually moving, conceals the necessary jugglery of the sponges. By some this subtlety may not be thought worth while, but the magician who studies detail will include this in his routine.

Before giving some uses of this method, I should like to give a warning. *Don't splash the carbon tetrachloride on a polished surface!* This includes polished flooring.

The most elementary method, but one by which the maximum effect is obtained is as follows: by dipping a piece of chalk into the mucilage-alcohol mixture a message is written on one surface of an ordinary slate; when dry the slate is placed message side downwards on the operator's table. To present, the operator's left hand takes up the slate, keeping the unmarked surface facing audience. The right hand takes the sponge soaked with carbon tetrachloride and commences washing the surface nearest the operator (the message side). Directly the chemical has soaked in to and rendered invisible the writing, the slate is gradually turned round, the audience seeing a wet but unmarked surface. The simulation of cleaning is continued during the turning and for a moment or two more, until there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that they have seen two unmarked surfaces. The slate is turned round and the blank side washed. The slate can now be isolated and the message will appear directly evaporation has taken place. A very strong point is that a member of the audience can be asked to pick up the slate and

show the audience that the impossible has happened. If this method is used it is not a bad idea to use ordinary school slates and leave them behind after the show.

Another advantage with this method is that one set of figures or letters can easily be changed into another set. Supposing that the ultimate group of figures giving the answer to a sum are 13 17. These figures are written with *treated* chalk on one surface of a slate; the addition of a few strokes with ordinary chalk can transform them into 4 8 7 9. In the accompanying and subsequent diagrams, the treated chalk is represented with white lines, whilst the ordinary chalk is shown shaded.



It will be seen that by putting a flap over the surface of the slate bearing the wrong total, the slate can be shown blank on both sides. With the elimination of the flap, using one of the methods previously outlined, the operator produces for the audience the wrong total—4 8 7 9. A wash with carbon tetrachloride the correct set of figures—1 3 17 appears.



The second diagram shows how the name BERYL can be changed into EIFI, whilst the third shows how the word BEES might first appear as BBBS and here again a wash with the chemical gives the correct word.



I now give an original and rather telling effect, and call it—

THE PROOF OF THE THEORY

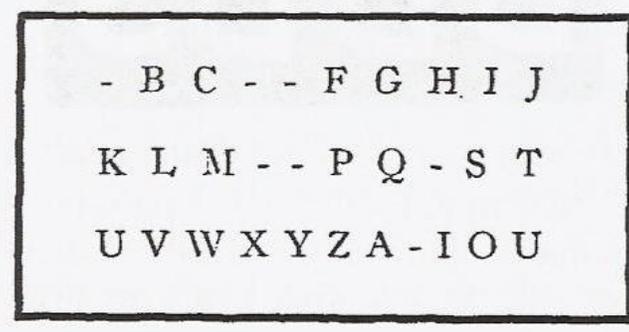
The operator picks up a slate; one side is shown to be blank, whilst on the other side the following letters are printed in chalk:—



The slate is put down on a table and a book picked up. This is offered to a spectator with a request that he choose two words in it and remember them. Taking the slate again the operator remarks that his audience have heard of the theory that “matter can neither be created nor be destroyed.” *He goes on to say* that he will prove this theory. The slate is then cleaned on both sides with a wet sponge. The sponge is placed down and the slate held facing the audience. “Watch says the operator, and as the audience watch some of the original letters re-appear visibly on the side of the slate facing them. Several letters, however, are missing from the original set. A checkup proves that these are to be found in the chosen words. “*I said that I would prove a theory,*” says the operator, “the missing letters have not been destroyed—they have simply separated themselves from the other letters.” At this point the slate is turned slowly round and on the other side the missing letters are found forming the selected words.

Requirements: A slate with a loose fitting flap, some ordinary chalk, a mixture of alcohol and mucilage, non-abrasive sponge, dish, carbon tetrachloride and the means for forcing two words from a book. In this connection nothing can be better than the Stanley Collins’ book of poems previously mentioned, which forces the words “DEAR ONE” in the most straight forward manner. Before a large audience such a force is highly desirable.

Preparation: Dipping the chalk into the mucilage-alcohol mixture and allowing it to *soak well*, it is removed and the excess moisture wiped off. The following letters are now printed on the slate (supposing that the words DEAR ONE are *to be used*)



The missing letters marked with dashes are now printed in with *ordinary* chalk. The slate is now turned over and on the blank surface are printed with the *treated* chalk the words DEAR ONE. When these words have dried (a matter of a minute) the flap is placed on this side of the slate. With the dish well filled with carbon tetrachloride, the sponge inside and the book at hand the operator is ready for presentation which is as follows:—

The slate is picked up and both sides deliberately shown. It is then replaced on the table flap side down. The book is handed to a spectator who is asked to open it where he pleases. Supposing he opens it at pages 24 and 25; he is asked to note the 24th and 25th words in the poem and remember them. The operator now picks up the slate with the left hand, the flap being left behind on the table. Keeping the lettered side facing the audience, the right hand takes the sponge and making sure that it holds a good content of carbon tetrachloride, starts washing the side away from the audience (the side on which the words DEAR ONE are printed). Directly the liquid has made the words invisible the *left hand gradually turns the slate until this side faces the audience*, at the same time the right still passes the sponge across the surface. The audience have now seen what they think to be an unmarked side thoroughly cleaned. The slate is now turned over and the side with the printed letters washed with the chemical. Here the necessity for a non-abrasive sponge becomes apparent, as in this cleaning enough pressure must be exerted to erase the letters printed in ordinary chalk; any abrasive material used in this general washing would at the same time remove quite a lot of the treated chalk. (The operator must not be niggardly in applying the carbon tetrachloride or he will find that evaporation may anticipate his patten.) After the sponge is placed down, the slate is held with the last washed side facing the audience. As the chemical evaporates those letters written with the treated chalk visibly re-appear, whilst those written with the ordinary chalk are of course missing. The spectator is asked if the missing letters would form the words remembered. After the affirmative answer has been given, the slate is turned over to reveal the words.

There are some who would say that the visible re-appearance of the letters as the liquid evaporates is *prima facie* evidence to an intelligent audience that some chemical means is being used. By using a dead black surfaced slate and avoiding reflection of strong lights the transition from a wet to a dry state of surface is not too noticeable. I have tried it with many types of audience and have always found that the visible re-appearance of the letters on the slate has evoked that reaction from the audience which is apparent when they “cannot believe their eyes.” As an alternative, however, I make the suggestion that the book be taken back in an opened state and laid on the table.

After the cleaning of the slate has taken place the book is taken up and held in an open condition against the slate. When the time lapse has been judged for completion of evaporation, the book is removed and the ultimate effect accomplished.

Wishing to obtain writing on *both sides* of a slate under fairly stringent conditions, I devised the following. I call it :—

QUESTION AND ANSWER

This effect is intended for a small audience. The operator distributes about twenty small writing pads and pencils. Each recipient is asked to write a brief question. While this is being done, a member of the audience is requisitioned as an assistant. He, or she, is then seated on the right of the operator. The operator hands the assistant a silk bag for examination and then picks up a slate which he shows to be blank on both surfaces. The slate is placed down and the audience asked to fold the papers on which they have written their questions. The questions are collected on a tray and a spectator is asked to select one from the bunch and this is handed to the assistant holding the silk bag. The slate is now picked up, cleaned on both sides and put into the silk bag together with a piece of chalk. The assistant is now asked, first to open the slip of paper that he holds and read aloud the question, and secondly to take the slate out of the bag. On one side of the slate is found written in chalk, “You ask me the following question, will etc., etc. . . .P.T.O.” On obeying the instructions the slate is turned over and the answer to the question is also found in chalk. Everything can be examined.

Requirements: One slate with two loose flaps, one to fit on each side; a glass tray; mucilage-alcohol mixture; carbon tetrachloride with dish and sponge; writing pads and pencils; a silk bag large enough to accommodate the slate (the one I use is somewhat like an old-fashioned Dorothy bag, or slipper bag, with a piece of silk cord running through the hem at the mouth).

The question and answer that are written on the slate are, as the reader will guess, the result of a force. The slip removed from the tray by a spectator has to be switched in transit to the assistant with the tray. For this switch many methods may be used, but one that I can recommend is an A1 Baker idea utilizing a thumb-tip. To achieve this switch a piece of paper is folded and inserted inside a thumb-tip in such a way that when the thumb is inserted the paper rests against the ball of the thumb. A spectator is now asked to place a folded slip (which he has taken from the tray) on the palm of the operator’s left hand. Remembering that the assistant with the bag is on the operator’s right, it will be seen that to pass the paper to him the most

natural way will be for the right hand to take from the left thus: as the thumb-tip of the right hand contacts the paper on the palm of the left, the latter turns palm inwards to the body, its fingers closing lightly over the thumb-tip, which retains the selected paper against the palm; at the same time right hand thumb slides paper out of thumb-tip whilst the first finger of the same hand grips the paper on the opposite side. If done in an unhurried and deliberate manner it is a perfect simulation of a natural action.

Preparation. On a slip of paper torn from one of the writing pads, write a question which is sure to be written by one of the audience. In normal times if you know your audience it is not very difficult but today a big percentage will undoubtedly write, "When will the war end?" This slip is then folded across say three times and inserted in the thumb-tip which in turn is placed in the operator's vest pocket together with a piece of chalk. On one side of the slate is now written with treated chalk, "You ask me the following question—When will the war end?" P.T.O. The slate is turned over and an appropriate answer written. One flap is placed over each surface so the slate now appears blank on both sides. The slate is placed on the table together with the pads, pencils—these should be attached to the pads—and silk bag. Sponge and carbon tetrachloride should be at hand. A slip of paper is torn from one of the pads and is laid on the table.

Presentation, The pads are distributed and the invitation to write questions made. An assistant is invited to help and is seated on the right and given the silk bag. Operator picks up the slate and shows both sides to be blank. Replacing it on the table the slip of paper is picked up and the audience shown how the papers should be folded—ostensibly with the excuse that no one but the person concerned can have any inkling of what is written. Actually the maneuver makes sure that the folded papers are of similar size to the one concealed in the thumb-tip.

The operator then takes the piece of chalk from his vest pocket, at the same time slipping thumb into the thumb-tip. The chalk is laid on the table with, or without, an appropriate remark. The operator now collects the slips on the glass tray, and handing this latter to a spectator asks him to pick one slip of paper and to drop it on his (operator's) hand. The switch as previously described is now made and the "force" slip handed to the assistant. Operator now picks up the slate with his left hand, leaving the bottom flap on the table and keeping the exposed side towards his body. Right hand now takes the sponge and washes this side. Plenty of carbon tetrachloride is used and the slate is turned round gradually.

At this point a remark is made that the assistant should have the chalk. As the right hand holds the sponge the left hand puts the slate down momentarily and picks up chalk and hands it to the assistant who is holding the bag; the left hand then picks up slate, leaving the flap behind, and the same moves are gone through in cleaning. The slate is now put into the silk bag, and the assistant asked to drop the piece of chalk inside. The paper is unfolded and the question read by the assistant. The effect is completed by the withdrawal of the slate from the bag and the exhibition of the messages. In taking the silk bag from the assistant, the operator can get rid of the thumb-tip and paper (which it will be remembered he is still holding) by dropping it inside.

Section IV

METHODS FOR OBTAINING MESSAGES , NOT COVERED BY THE PREVIOUS SECTIONS

J. F. Orrin's Method.

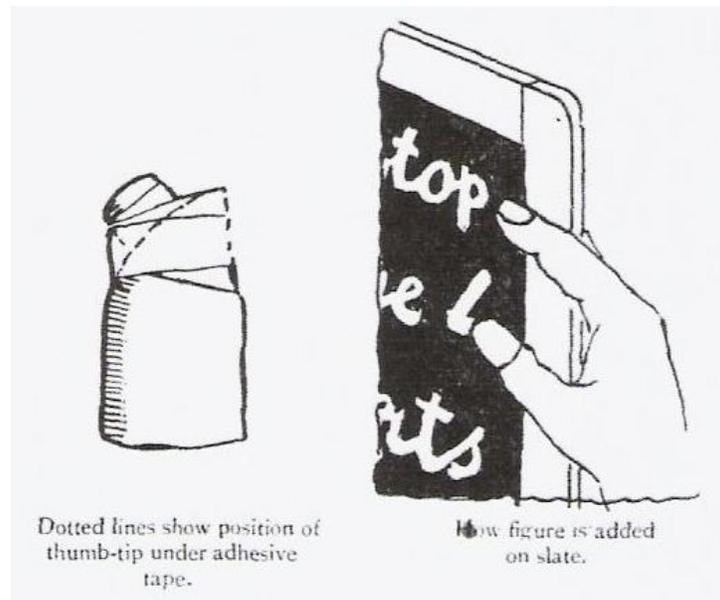
The first of the methods I wish to mention comes from the fertile mind of my friend J. F. Orrin. A silicate slate is used and the operator paints on the slate with white paint the word or message he wishes to produce. When the paint has dried the words are blacked out with black pastel. On top of the whole, a word or words are written with ordinary chalk. If the slate is vigorously cleaned the chalk and pastel will be erased, leaving the painted message showing. This is a beautiful idea, but the originator admits in one of his books the draw-back that is bound to occur. That is, the fact that an application of black pastel on top of the paint tends to discolor it, with the result that to get the best effect a new slate and painted message is almost necessary for each performance. In discussing the method with its originator some while back I offered him a practical means of overcoming the difficulty. It is as follows: instead of a silicate slate being used an ordinary school slate is taken and a message written in chalk.

A piece of celluloid such as is found in children's tracing books, is placed over this with the matt side uppermost. This piece of celluloid should be slightly larger than the slate, so that it can be slipped under the edges of the frame and thus be held in position. In this state the slate should appear quite ordinary at a distance of a few feet. The celluloid is now damped slightly (this is merely in order to apply pastel more easily) and a pastel of slate color is smeared over its surface thus hiding the writing underneath. A message or word is now written with ordinary chalk on the celluloid surface. A wipe with a wet sponge will now have the effect of erasing the surface message, and

rendering the celluloid transparent and thus revealing the message on the slate. The uses for such a method will be apparent . . .the slate is covered with a flap, the flap disposed of and the wrong message revealed. Cleaning of the slate reveals the correct message.

THE CHALK THUMB TIP

Another useful adjunct is a thumb-tip to which a piece of chalk is attached; you thus have a "Swami" thumb-tip with chalk taking the place of pencil. This can very easily be made if the reader possesses a metal thumb-tip. A small piece of chalk is taken and placed in position on the ball part of the thumb-tip. A piece of medical flesh-coloured adhesive tape is then wound round chalk and thumb-tip leaving about an eighth of an inch of chalk protruding (see illustration).



It will be found that if the operator places the thumb-tip on either of his thumbs and holds the slate in front of him with both hands, it is an easy matter to write on the surface of the slate nearest to him. It is obvious that the amount of writing to be done is limited, but the following is an example of its usefulness. A spectator is offered a deck of cards with a request that he shuffles *it* thoroughly. He is then to think of one of the suits. He is asked which suit it is and the operator picks up a slate and writes something on it. Keeping the written side away from his audience, the operator asks the spectator with the cards to deal the cards face up, one at a time and stop at the first card of the suit he mentioned. Supposing that the suit was hearts, the spectator may stop at the four. Pointing out that the cards have never been in his hands and that the choice of suit was free, the slate is turned round; on it is found written: "You will stop at the 4 of hearts."

The secret is as simple as it is subtle. When the suit has been chosen the operator writes on the slate—

You Will
Stop
at the

A space being left for the denomination of the particular hearts card. The operator holds the slate with the message facing him. The spectator now deals and stops at the first heart. In recapitulating what has happened the operator has ample time to add in the blank space the figure 4. The beauty of this effect is that most people will be prepared to swear that the suit decided upon was chosen *after* the prediction was written. If the thumb-tip is on the right thumb, the best writing position is obtained by holding the right edge of the slate between the first and second fingers (this gives full play for the thumb) whilst the left hand holds its corresponding edge in a similar manner. Care must be taken so that the audience get no flash of the chalk.

MAX HOLDEN 'S METHOD

A favorite method originated by Max Holden utilizes starch as a writing medium. For impromptu and close-up work this is unequalled, because there is absolutely no sound while the thumb writing is being done. Mr. Holden's thumb tip consists of a small circle of adhesive tape with a small hole cut out of its center. In this hole is placed a small lump of starch. Lay the adhesive on your table, sticky side up, where you can obtain it when needed simply by pressing down on it with your thumb. This Holden tip is used as explained in the above trick.

VERRALLWASS ' METHOD

Another method for adding a single figure was outlined by Verrall Wass. This was an adaptation of a rising card idea by Tom Sellers. The operator has his wand tucked under his left arm. One end of this wand has attached to it a piece of chalk instead of the more usual celluloid tip. It can be realised that if a slate surface is brought in contact with it a slight movement of either slate or wand will produce the desired figure.

WOODHOUSE PITMAN 'S METHOD

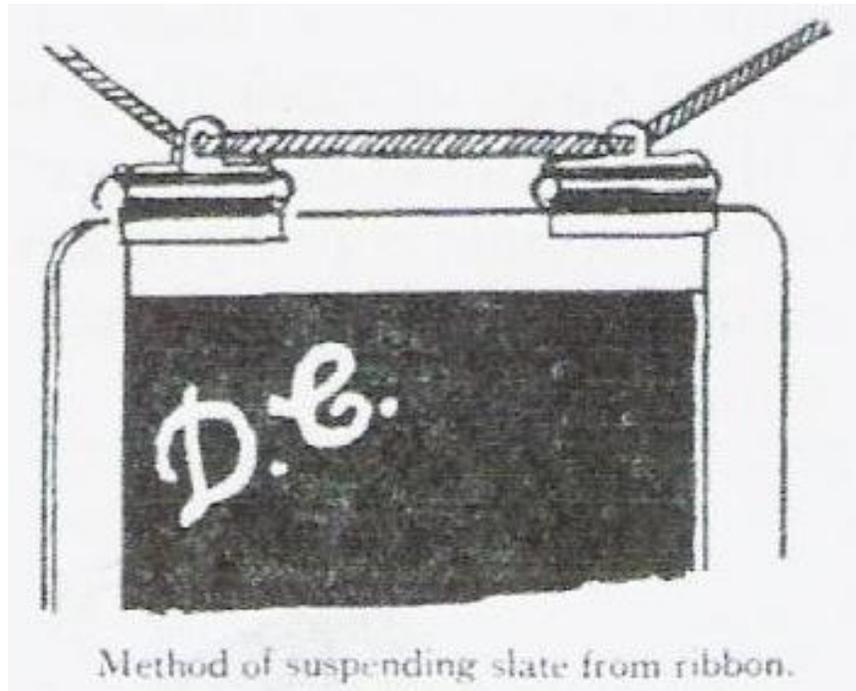
One of the most effective methods for obtaining writing on a slate which can be examined and marked on both sides, was originated by Woodhouse Pitman. Some of you may remember it being presented at a Grand Séance many years ago. This method of accomplishing an apparent impossibility is again the acme of simplicity. A piece of fairly heavy black paper is taken and a word written on it in white chalk (this word, needless to say, is one that the operator intends to produce on the slate as a climax to his experiment.) This word is then cut out with a pair of scissors (for this reason the operator should see that the writing is continuous— a specimen is illustrated).

Comet

To obtain the effect, the operator, prior to presentation, folds a large handkerchief to a size slightly larger than the cut out word. This handkerchief is placed at the rear of the table. On the non-chalk side of the cut out paper a few dabs of some viscous substance, such as Seccotine, are placed. I have actually found, laughable as it may seem, that treacle answers best for the purpose. This piece of paper is now laid on the handkerchief tacky side upwards. The procedure is now as follows: The operator offers a slate for examination and asks that it may be marked plainly on both sides. Returning to the stage, the slate upon some pretext, is laid down on the cut out paper. The presence of the handkerchief affords enough pressure to press the paper against the surface of the slate. It only remains now for the operator to bring the effect to a conclusion. If the cutting out is well done the illusion is perfect at a few feet.

A presentation that I have used with this particular method is as follows: The stage is set with the operator's table central; on this rests the handkerchief with the necessary cut out on top, and in front of the handkerchief rests a tray. This latter contains the slate and a number of postcards on which pictures of famous magicians are portrayed. About 3 ft. above the table and running from one side of the stage to the other, is fixed a piece of silk ribbon. At the sides of the stage this ribbon should be fastened as high as possible and before being placed in position two large bulldog clips are threaded. These clips will naturally fall to the lowest part of the ribbon— over the table. The central portion of the ribbon is now lifted and slipped over a hook at the rear of the stage, thus allowing freedom of action around the

table until the ribbon is required. A cup, used for the Cups and Balls trick is at hand, also a piece of chalk. The cut-out I used was the name "Comte."



The procedure is as follows: The operator picks up the slate and postcards and advances into the audience. The slate and chalk are handed to a member of the audience with the request that he will examine the slate and then make some distinctive mark on each side. Whilst this is being done the operator forces the postcard bearing a picture of Comte. Leaving this postcard in the spectator's hands, the operator takes the slate and returns to the stage. Mentioning the fact that he wishes to raise the spirit of the selected magician under test conditions, the operator deposits the postcards on the tray whilst the slate is laid down on the cut out as the operator steps back to release the ribbon. This is now steadied over the table with one hand whilst the other picks up the slate, the side to which the cut out is adhering being kept away from the audience. A clip is now fastened at each end of the slate and in this state is left suspended over the table. Stating that he has in his possession some article that was used by each of the magicians portrayed, the operator asks the spectator the name of the magician. When "Comte" is announced the operator removes the cup from its hiding place. The piece of chalk is taken and the usual pass made for apparently putting a ball under a cup. "Now we shall see some of Comte's magic!" The cup is lifted showing that the chalk has disappeared. In placing the cup down the chalk is introduced. The slate is then removed from the clips, showing the name "Comte" written across the marked surface, and as a logical conclusion the cup is lifted, revealing the chalk once more.

It will be noted that the use of the ribbons and the clips gives a perfect pretext for putting down the slate. It is also effective to have the slate marked with coloured chalk, the word to appear being written in white chalk.

METHODS OF PSEUDO MEDIUMS

A method which is good because the slate can be examined before and after the message appears, is one which was in fashion for a while with pseudo mediums. We will suppose that the operator is demonstrating an effect in which the answer to a sum appears on an examined slate. On the presumption that as the result of a force the figures will be 9167, the operator obtains a piece of good quality felt and upon its surface writes the numbers in the correct order. With a pair of sharp scissors he then carefully cuts the figures out of the felt. Laying the figures in the order in which they will appear on the slate, their surface is smeared with seccotine and a piece of cardboard laid on top ; a heavy book or paper weight is laid on the cardboard.

When the seccotine is dry the cardboard is turned over and the figures will be seen in reverse. To incorporate this fake with the effect, it is placed on the operator's table and a quantity of French chalk dusted across the surface of the felt. The slate, after being examined, is cleaned with a damp sponge and under some pretext is placed down on top of the felt. The fact that the surface is damp causes the particles of French chalk to adhere to the surface of the slate and form the required set of figures. Giving the moisture time to evaporate, the operator turns the slate round; if water is found to be too slow in evaporating, carbon tetrachloride might be used. A natural pretext for placing the slate down was given in the previous method and could serve a similar purpose here.

COMEDY TYPE METHOD

A picture or message is drawn or written on a silicate slate; over this is placed a piece of black flash paper cut to fit just inside the slate frame. By means of a small dab of conjurer's wax at each corner, the flash paper is stuck to the slate. In this state the slate at a distance of a few feet (provided the flash paper has not been crumpled before use) looks unprepared. If the tip of a lighted cigarette is now pressed in the center of the flash paper it will not flash off in the usual way, but will burn outwards from the centre to the edges, creating an unusual effect which culminates in the appearance of the message or picture on the slate. Besides simply obtaining a picture or

message by burning the paper, a drawing could be made on the flash paper as well as on the slate proper, thus causing a transformation. A few ideas in both directions are as follows:

1. The operator remarks that he will show how the modern magician produces a rabbit from a hat. The slate is shown with drawing of hat on it. A touch of flame and a rabbit appears on the slate.

2. The operator talks of an unscrupulous person who burnt his house in order to get the insurance money. Picture of a ramshackle house on slate. "He started a fire with a cigarette end." Flash paper is touched off and a picture of a cheque appears on the slate.

3. The operator says he will try to raise the spirits. Blank slate shown; flash paper is touched off and drawing of a "Johnnie Walker" bottle appears.

4. Operator mentions the Indian Mango trick. Slate is shown with mango seed drawn upon it. Flash paper is touched *off* and a coloured picture of a flowering tree appears.

5. By using a flap as well, the operator can show the slate blank on both sides. A wrong message is produced, written on the flash paper. This is then touched off and the correct one produced.

ONE OTHER METHOD

Taking a slate, the operator writes with a piece of stearine the message he wishes to produce. This marking, at a little distance, is invisible. By simply, in the act of cleaning the slate, dusting a quantity of French chalk over the stearine, it is caused to adhere, and the message appears, apparently written in chalk. I have found that a lady's powder puff is the best medium for applying the French chalk.

Section V

THE USE OF THE SLATE AS AN AUXILIARY

To those who indulge in mentalistic magic, the slate is not only an object which fits naturally into the setting, but is an invaluable assistant in innumerable ways, of which the undermentioned form a few :—

1. The secreting of information.
2. The conveyance of information to an assistant.
3. As cover for opening billets.
4. As a drawing board. Used by a spectator in this respect, methods have been devised whereby drawings made by a spectator, on a slate, are duplicated by the operator on another slate.
5. As a cover for billet switching.

THE SECRETING OF INFORMATION

As an illustration I will describe a simple but extremely effective magazine test which I have used for some years. It has formed a closure in drawing room work to three effects in which the odds against the operator being right are multiplied with each effect. The second effect is the stabbing of a chosen card whilst blindfolded. After this effect I ask a spectator to lift up a pile of magazines from the table and to ask some other spectator to choose one. The magazines are returned to the table by the assistant, who is then asked to hand me a slate and a piece of chalk from the table. He does this and returns to his seat. I now ask for a number between 1 and 10; when it has been given I write it plainly on the slate. Another number between 1 and 10 is asked for and when this has been given I write this underneath the first figure. Supposing that the numbers given are 6 and 2, the spectator with the magazine is asked to turn to page 62, count down to line 6 and concentrate on the second word. Turning over the slate I write, a letter at a time, the chosen word.

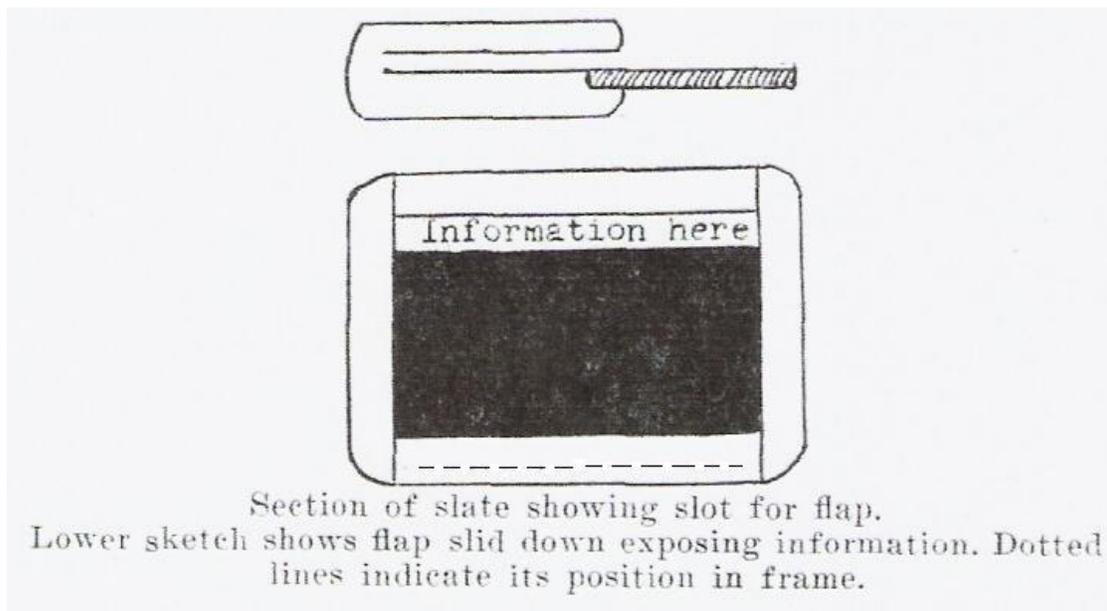
Requisites: one real slate, a piece of chalk, a pencil, and several magazines all with similar contents but having covers of different issues.

Preparation: Before actually giving this I should like to point out that from the spectators' point of view, because of the writing of the numbers underneath one another on the slate, the impression is that a page, line and word in that line have been freely selected. If this were so, the odds against the operator being successful would be thousands to one. Actually only 80 words are involved, starting with line 1, word 1, on page 11, and finishing with line 9, word 9 on page 99 (incidentally in working this effect some dozens of times I have never had the second number given as a duplicate of the first). The operator takes a pencil and writes the eighty words on the slate (where the second cipher is 0 the word is of course omitted). I suggest that they should be written in four columns of 20 per column, the page number being placed in front. Although invisible at a distance of a few feet it is easily seen by the operator by getting it at the right angle with the lighting, the glaze of the graphite standing out. Prior to presentation the slate, with pencilled side down, is laid on the table, a piece of chalk put on top, and the stack of magazines placed by the side.

Presentation : A spectator is requested to take the magazines and have one selected. When he returns with the remainder the operator asks him to put them down and hand him (operator) the chalk and slate. The numbers are asked for and written on the slate by the operator, one at the top, and one at the bottom. When doing this keep the eyes closed (it is a good axiom when working with a blindfold, never to peek until occasion demands). The selected page is turned to, and the line and word found. Verbally stressing the hard task that has been set him, the operator turns the slate round and peeking down the blindfold sights the necessary word; this is then written a letter at a time on the pencilled side of the slate. The writing should cover the slate, thus helping to cover the pencilling. The slate is then turned round and the written word shown. There is, of course, no need for the operator to be blindfolded, but I have found it more effective that way.

In a similar way a series of drawings can be made on a slate surface. Supposing that the operator has a set of different designs or simple pictures on cards. These cards are stacked in a certain order, a duplication of the designs in this order is now drawn on the slate. If a set of cards is broken at any point and a card withdrawn by a spectator who is asked to concentrate on the design, a cut of the cards will bring the card immediately above the chosen card to the bottom of the stack. By sighting this card and in attempting to draw the spectator's card, the operator looks at his key; the design following the one which he sighted being the one in the spectator's keeping. If the pencil is made with an H B it will stand up for several shows providing the chalk marks are erased with a piece of heavy pile plush.

The operator who may feel dubious about his ability to see pencil marks on a slate, may be interested in a trick slate which I had constructed some time back. It consists of an ordinary silicate slate, on top of which is a flap capable of sliding backwards and forwards, incisions in the frame allowing for this movement. Where the slate surface is exposed by the movement of the flap, a piece of white paper is pasted, and on this the necessary information is written. The illustration should make this clear.



Supposing that an effect similar to the one already outlined is being presented, the operator picks up the trick slate and a piece of chalk. A slight pressure of the thumb slides the flap in whichever direction is needed and the operator is in possession of the desired information. The reader will realise that other mechanical slates can easily be devised, the method of revealing the information depending upon the mechanical ingenuity of the designer.

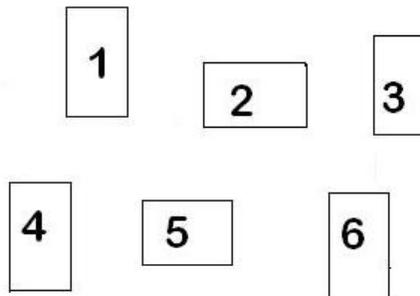
THE CONVEYANCE OF INFORMATION TO AN ASSISTANT BY MEANS OF A SLATE

Possibly one of the easiest ways of accomplishing this is by using a thumb-tip pencil writer. Let us suppose that the operator's assistant is seated in another room. The operator asks a spectator to select any card he wishes from an ordinary deck. Whether the operator has the card selected face down or face up is a matter for himself, but assuming that he has gained knowledge of the card taken, he adjusts a thumb-tip pencil writer on his right thumb. With this same hand he picks up a slate from the table, while with his left hand he takes a piece of chalk from his pocket. Impressing on all present the sheer impossibility of his assistant having any knowledge of the selected card, the operator asks someone to take the slate and chalk to the assistant. Whilst he is saying this the operator, with the pencil writer, puts the initials of the card on the frame of the slate, or on the slate itself. The latter is better, but more difficult. The slate is taken to the assistant, who looks at the pencil marks and then writes the name on the slate. The slate is then brought back to the operator and another experiment in pure thought transmission is brought to a successful conclusion. This method can of course be used for things other than cards. With the operator and assistant memorizing a number of articles and associating them with a number, the mere penciling of such a number on the slate gives the necessary clue.

ANOTHER METHOD

in which the slate plays a useful part in conveying information, is that in which the relative positions of slate and chalk are placed. Supposing that the information is required for cards; it is possible by the positioning of a slate to give six values.

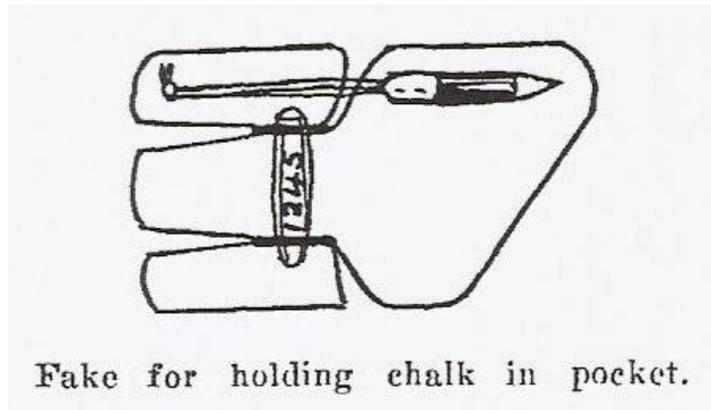
If the slate has a slight dark on the frame on one side, by turning the slate over twelve values can be obtained. The illustration shows the positions for obtaining these values, and thus assuming that a deck of cards is intended for use, the ace to the Queen are represented. (Let us leave the question of the King for the moment.) The suits are represented by different pieces of chalk.



A long piece that has been used both ends represents hearts, a short piece used both ends represents diamonds, a long piece broken at one end represents clubs, whilst a short piece broken at one end represents spades. The presentation is such that the operator's assistant is outside the room. The slate which is to be used rests on a chair. The two pieces of chalk representing the black suits are placed in the operator's left side pocket and those representing the red suits are placed in the right side pocket. A card is selected from the deck. Once again the operator stresses the impossibility of his assistant having any knowledge of that card. Whilst saying this he takes the slate from the chair and places it on a table in the position necessary to represent the value of the card. He then takes the necessary piece of chalk from his pocket so that the suit is denoted— an easy thing as the red suits are in one pocket and the black suits are in the other. The chalk is laid by the side of the slate *unless the card selected is a King*. Quite obviously in this case the position of the slate doesn't matter, the fact that the chalk is *on* the slate is definite evidence that such a card has been selected. To complete the effect, the operator has the assistant summoned back to the room, whilst he goes to the extreme end. The assistant writes the name of the selected card on the slate. It will be seen that if this method is used first, the previous method with the thumb-tip writer may be used to repeat the effect under more stringent conditions.

THE THIRD METHOD

does not really involve the slate as a medium of transmission, but, as a piece of chalk is necessary, a slate forms a natural complement. Although the method is old and can be found in Robinson's *Spirit Slate Writing*, it is remarkable to relate that thirty years after its publication the method was marketed by Julius Zancig at ten dollars. The method is simplicity itself. A piece of chalk is taken and one side filed or sandpapered until it has a flat surface. The information to be conveyed to the assistant is written *secretly* on this flat side of the chalk by the operator. The way in which this can be done is a matter for the individual, but I will give two suggestions. Supposing that members of the audience have written several lines of numbers and these are finally cast, giving a total. It is this total the operator wishes to convey to his assistant who is seated in another room.



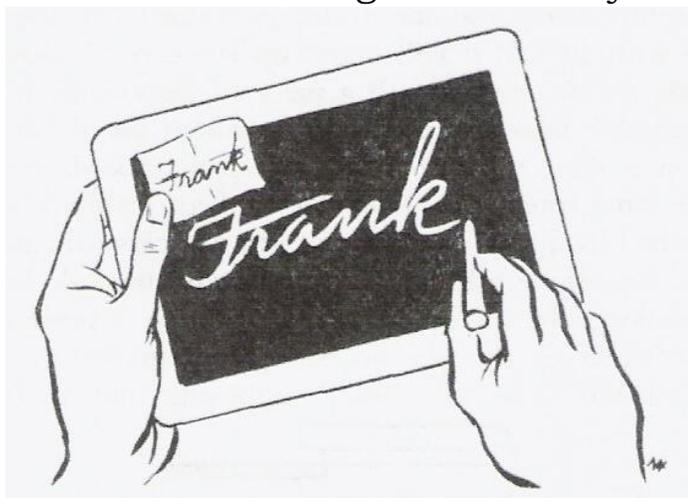
Fake for holding chalk in pocket.

While the casting is being done the operator with a piece of chalk and a small piece of pencil in his hands, which are held behind him, stands in a nonchalant way and at the same time writes the total on the flat side of the chalk. If the operator is good at casting he can beat the spectator to the total. This is, in my opinion, a method which in good hands requires a lot of beating, but if the operator is nervous of adopting such a bold procedure and would prefer some cover while the actual writing is being done, I suggest that a piece of thick cardboard be cut to the shape shown in the diagram. The addition of two elastic bands hold the chalk in place, making it quite a simple job to move it when required. A dance pencil is secured to one corner of this card and the whole is placed in the operator's right hand trousers pocket, the chalk side being away from the operator's body. He will now find it an easy matter, while standing hand in pocket, to jot down the necessary information. Whichever method the operator adopts, the subsequent procedure is the same: the piece of chalk is laid on the slate and given to a member of the audience to take to the assistant, who, after noting the information on the chalk, writes it on the slate.

THE SLATE AS A COVER FOR BILLET READING

The magician who performs in public and features some form of billet reading, is often faced with the problem of secretly reading the contents of such billets. Unlike the fraudulent medium, he cannot always set his own conditions, and in addition he has, possibly, the attention of one hundred pairs of eyes instead of one or two. For such occasions the slate forms a perfect cover. Let me outline an elementary example. We will suppose that a member of the audience has been requested to write a name on a slip of paper. This same spectator is now requested to fold the paper once and again. The slip is now taken by the operator who in the act of dropping it into a glass or passing to another member of the audience for safe-keeping, switches it for a blank slip. (The switching of billets is a subject on its own. The A1 Baker switch mentioned in the effect "Question and Answer" is admirable for occasion, but as in most cases possession of the spectator's slip is important, it might be obtained in much the same way that the magician obtains a folded bank note which is placed in an envelope, *i.e.*, through a slit in the envelope or the use of a thumb-tip; the envelope, apparently containing the billet, is then burnt, whilst the operator is left with the needed billet.)

The hand containing the spectator's folded paper goes to the pocket to obtain a piece of chalk and at the moment the fingers are covered the paper is unfolded. The hand is withdrawn with the edge of the paper clipped between the first and second fingers of the hand, whilst the piece of chalk is held at the tips of the thumb and first finger. The left hand picks up a slate from the table. The slate is brought up to chest level, and the right hand with the chalk and billet meets it. This hand holds the edge of the slate between the third and fourth fingers. This way of holding brings the opened billet well over the surface of the slate which should be inclined so that no glimpse of the paper can be obtained by the spectators.



The thumb of the left hand reaches over and presses the billet against the surface of the slate. During the whole of this handling of the slate the performer's actions should appear casual. The performer, indicating that he is going to undertake an experiment

in thought reading under extremely difficult conditions, asks the person who wrote on the slip to visualise the name written.

The performer, to emphasise a point, lifts the chalk with his right hand, the slate and billet being retained in the left hand. The chalk is lowered on to the slate and after glimpsing the name written on the slip, the performer writes the name on the slate. Whilst the right hand is engaged in writing, the left thumb pulls the billet on to the rim of the slate. The performer asks the spectator who wrote on the billet, to state aloud the name he wrote. This having been done, the right hand moves across to the left side of the slate and with the left hand acting as a fulcrum swings it round to show that he has divined the spectator's thought correctly. At the moment the right hand touches the left side of the slate, the left thumb pushes the billet into the right palm.

Once the performer has possession of a billet the slate can always be used as cover, and although I have outlined a particular way of utilizing such cover, it is for the individual to discover the method most suited to his particular needs.

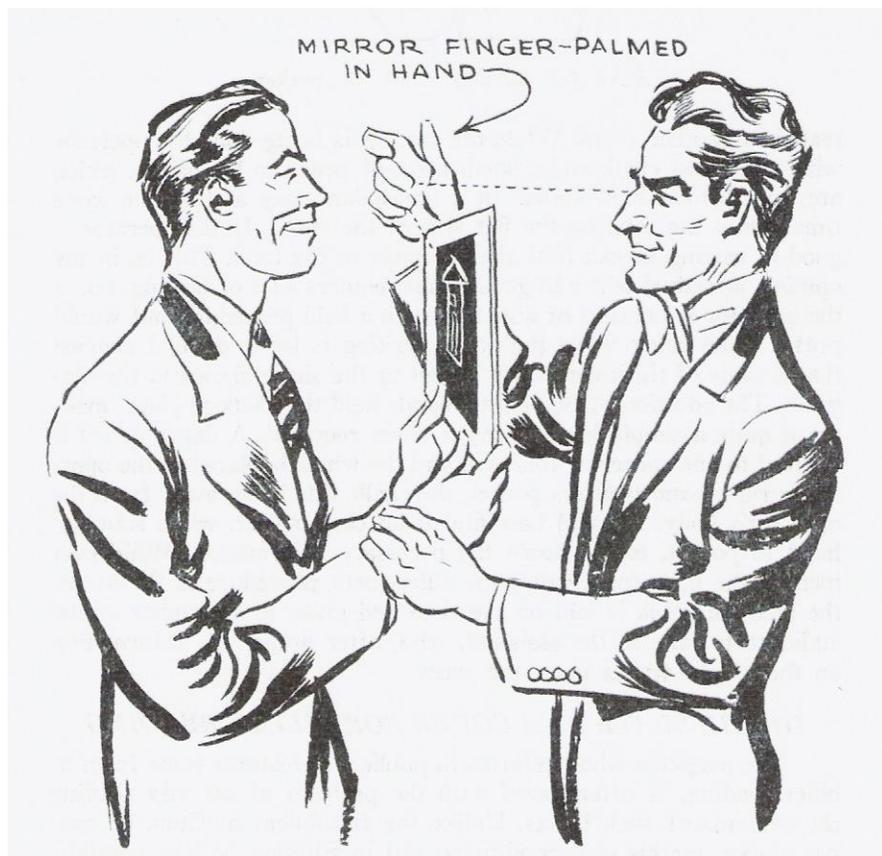
THE USE OF A SLATE AS A DRAWING BOARD

One might say, quite rightly, that it always serves that purpose, but let us examine how its normal usage can heighten the effect of a conjurer's trick. Here is an instance. The performer has two slates, some chalk and a pack of "Telepatha" cards (these cards, as previously mentioned, consist of a number of straight-forward designs and were introduced for E.S.P. tests). One of these cards is selected by a spectator who is asked to impress the design on his memory. The card is then replaced and the performer pockets the cards. The spectator is handed a slate and a piece of chalk. Taking the other slate and another piece of chalk, the performer walks to the other end of the room. He then impresses on the audience that the spectator is thinking of a geometrical design. (*No mention is made of a card with a design having been chosen. The cards are now out of sight.*) The spectator is now requested to reproduce his thoughts by drawing the design on the slate he holds. The performer at the same time starts drawing. When both slates are turned round they show that the performer has duplicated the drawing. To a lay audience this effect appears as genuine thought transmission. I mentioned that the cards were out of sight; at the end of the experiment they are out of mind, and the effect on the audience is that the *spectator thought of a design*. It is psychological play entirely, and the slates, although playing a passive part, help to make the effect. The information regarding the card selected can of course be obtained in many ways; personally, I should stack the deck.

A SECOND ROUTINE

Another method in which a drawing made on a slate is duplicated by the performer, is where the use is made of a small convex (diminishing) mirror. The procedure is as follows:—

A spectator is requested to draw some geometrical pattern on a slate which he is handed together with a piece of chalk. Whilst this is being done the performer turns his back, this gives him the opportunity to secure the small mirror which he finger-palms in the right hand. When the spectator says that he has finished the drawing, the performer turns round and asks the spectator holding the slate to concentrate on the drawing he has made. “I



want you to hold it right in front of you and visualise what you have drawn.”

As this is said, the performer walks across to the spectator and gripping the spectator’s right hand with his own left, raises this hand so that the slate in a vertical position is brought to the spectator’s eye level. At the same time, apparently to help this action, the performer’s right hand touches the top left hand side of the slate. This action enables the performer to obtain a reflection in miniature of the drawing on the slate. The performer then picks up another slate

and duplicates the spectator’s drawing.

Just one word: the move for glimpsing the drawing is not difficult but it must be practised so that the necessary angle for getting the reflection is obtained instantly. You cannot, however leisurely a worker you are, play indefinitely with the spectator’s slate. To the audience it should simply seem that you are placing the slate on the spectator’s eye level and nothing else.

A THIRD ROUTINE

Another method in which the performer duplicates the writing made on a slate by a spectator was published in *Jinx* No. 8. It was contributed by Dr. L., E. Duncanson. The effect is not quite the same as those mentioned previously, because here a spectator is asked to write a name and a number, as well as drawing a small geometrical pattern on a slate. This is all done whilst the performer's back is turned; in fact it can be done while he is absent from the room or hall. The spectator is asked to show the audience what he has written and then erase the chalk marks from the slate. This done, the performer turns round and taking the slate and chalk which have just been used the performer asks the audience to think of what was written and drawn on the slate. The writing and drawing are then successfully duplicated by the performer.

The means by which this effect is accomplished is by preparing the chalk. It is treated with oil, but I must digress for a moment. Dr. Duncanson instructs his reader to take a piece of chalk and let it soak in "three-in-one" oil and then allow it to dry. I have spent some time in experimenting and have found that even a slight application of oil to that part of the chalk which is to be used renders it useless as a medium for writing. Convinced, however, that oil and chalk in the U. S. A. may differ slightly from our own particular products, and believing that here was a first class effect, I tried out the method of dipping one end of a stick of chalk into some "three-in-one" oil and allowing capillary attraction to do the rest. I then broke off the end that had been dipped into the oil and used the rest of the piece. The result was satisfactory. That is the end of the digression and most of the preparation.

There is, however, just one other thing, and that is that the slate must have its surfaces free from grease, and therefore, prior to use, should be wiped with a sponge dipped in a solution of ammonia. The procedure in the effect is as follows: the spectator is handed the slate, the prepared chalk and a duster. He is instructed what to do. Although in the effect as described three things were to be done, it rests with the individual operator. We will, however, suppose that the spectator has written a name, a number, and then drawn a geometrical figure. He shows the slate to the audience and then, taking the duster, cleans the slate and erases the chalk marks. The small amount of oil in the chalk leaves a very thin line of oil which can be seen by the operator when he takes the slate and gets it at a certain angle to the light, easily found by experiment. It only remains for him to duplicate what the spectator originally wrote and drew. It is desirable that the spectator, when using the slate, should not be placed in too strong a light.

THE SLATE AS A MEANS FOR SWITCHING BILLETS

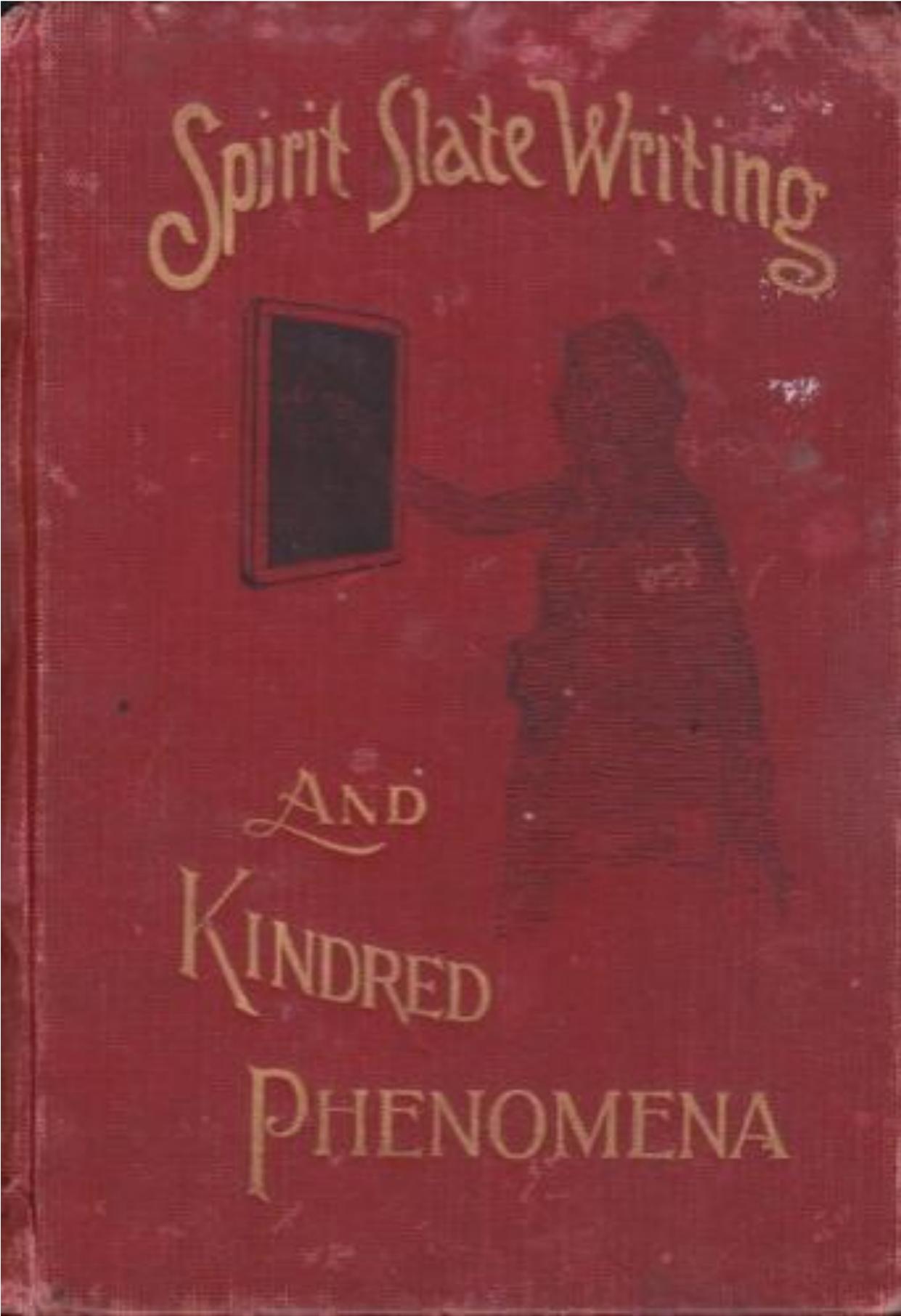
I shall give just two methods. The first is very simple and has its use on some occasions. It is as follows:—

The operator picks up a slate on which rests a pencil and a piece of paper, which is already creased for folding. Under the rim of slate is a duplicate piece of folded paper, the same size as the spectator's piece, and this is picked up with the slate. (Or the spectator's piece may be folded and he is asked to unfold it.) The paper and pencil are proffered to a spectator with a request that he should write a message or name and then fold the slip. Supposing that the slate is held in the right hand, the operator receives the folded billet with his left hand. He then apparently takes the billet with his right hand, at the same time taking the slate in the left hand. To accomplish this change over the billet is passed under the slate. At the moment it is covered, the right hand moves away with the duplicate paper whilst the spectator's paper is gripped under the frame of the slate with the left. As a movement by itself it is of course of no value, there obviously must be a follow-through, and so the operator drops the paper in his right hand into a glass, or burns it in the flame of a candle.

THE SECOND METHOD

This is a mechanical one, and is used for switching visiting cards or similar cards in small envelopes. The means for achieving this is a slate made upon similar lines to the tray commonly used in the "Just Chance" effect. Markings on the slate effectively conceal any joins in the wood work.

I have now reached the end of this discourse dealing with a part of magic which has always interested me. To those who would wish to extend their knowledge regarding slate effects beyond this, I would recommend the following books, which although not constituting a complete bibliography, help to show the diverse ways in which such an ordinary looking article can be used in magic.



SPIRIT SLATE WRITING
AND
KINDRED PHENOMENA

BY
WILLIAM E. ROBINSON
AKA Chung Ling Soo

Assistant to the late Herrmann

SIXTY SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

MUNN & COMPANY
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN OFFICE
New York City
1898

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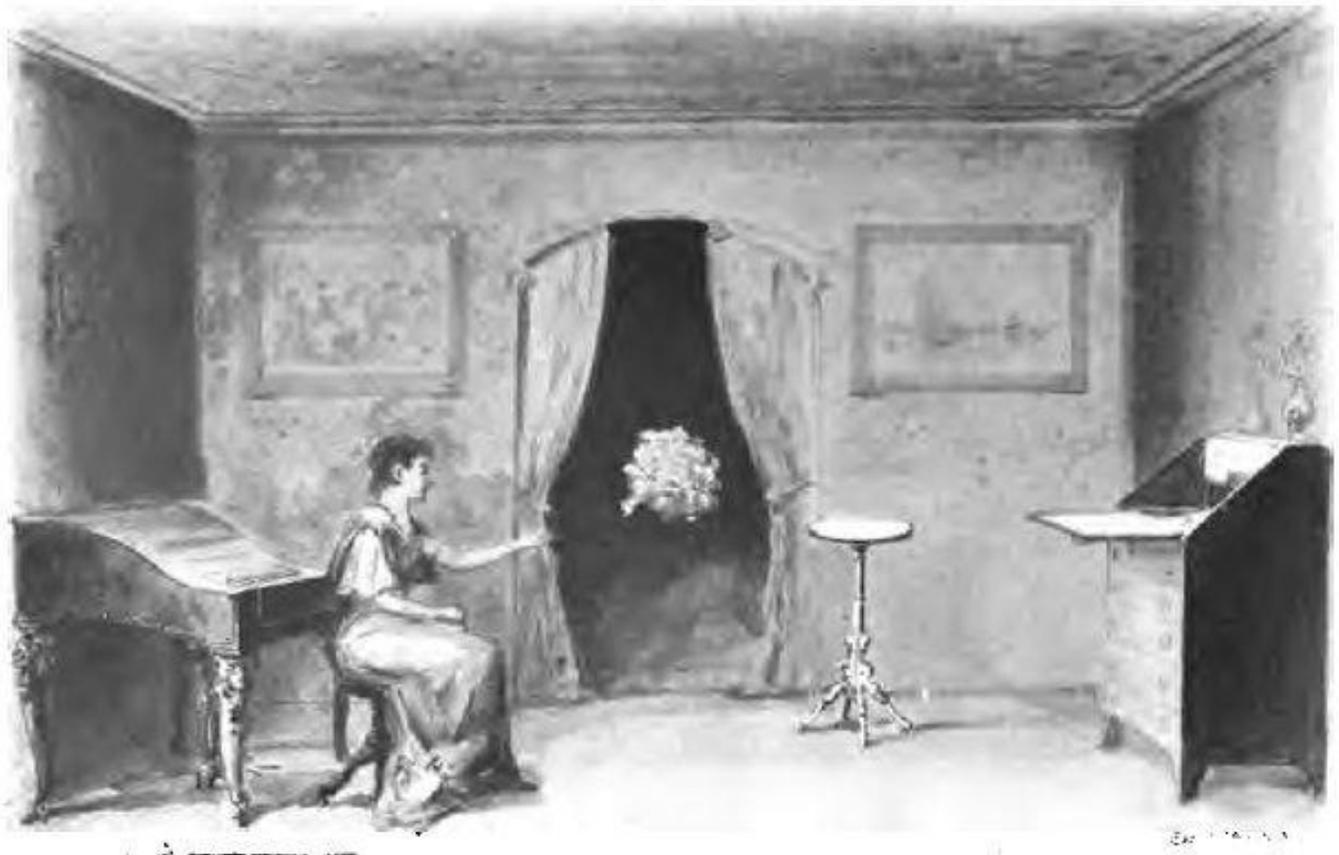
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Editor Note:

Only the routines having to do with slate work have been included. The complete volume is available online through public domain search.

SPIRIT SLATE WRITING AND KINDRED PHENOMENA



“The Spiritualistic Séance.”

PREFACE. The author of the present volume is not an opponent of spiritualism — on the contrary, he was brought up from childhood in this belief; and though, at the present writing, he does not acknowledge the truth of its teachings, nevertheless he respects the feelings of those who are honest in their convictions. At the same time he confidently believes that all rational persons, spiritualists as well as others, will heartily indorse this endeavor to explain the methods of those who, under the mask of medium ship, and possessing all the artifices of the charlatan, victimize those seeking knowledge of their loved ones who have passed away. As a great New York lawyer once said, it was not spiritualism he was fighting, but fraud under the guise of spiritualism.

Owing to the fact that the author has for many years been engaged in the practice of the profession of magic, both as a prestidigitateur and designer of stage illusions for the late Alexander Herrmann, and has also been associated with Prof. Kellar, he feels that he is fitted to treat of clever tricks used by mediums. He has attended hundreds of séances both at home and abroad, and the present volume is the fruit of his studies. Some of the means of working these slate tests may appear simple and impossible of deceiving, but in the hands of the medium they are entirely successful. It should be remembered it is not so much the apparatus employed as it is the shrewd, cunning, ever-observing sharper using it. The devices and methods employed by slate writing frauds seem innumerable. No sooner are they caught and exposed while employing one system than they immediately set their wits to work and evolve an entirely different idea. It is almost impossible at the first sitting with a slate writing medium to know what method he will employ, and should you, after the sitting, go away with the idea that you have discovered his method of operation and come a second time ready to expose him, you may be sadly disappointed, for the medium will undoubtedly lead you to believe he is going to use his former method, and so mislead you.

He accomplishes his test by another method, while you are on the lookout for something entirely different. The great success of the medium is in disarming the suspicions of the skeptic, and at that very moment the trick is done. Slate writing is of course the great standby of mediums, but there are many other tricks which they employ which are described in the present volume.

The publishers have added a chapter on "Miscellaneous Tricks" which may serve as a supplement to their "Magic: Stage Illusions and Scientific Diversions, Including Trick Photography" which has already obtained an enviable position in the literature of magic, and has been even translated into Swedish. These tricks are by Mr. W. B. Caulk and the author.

New York, November, 1898

SPIRIT SLATE WRITING AND KINDRED PHENOMENA.

CHAPTER I. The Single Slate.

There has probably been nothing that has made more converts to spiritualism than the much talked of "Slate Writing Test" and if we are to believe some of the stories told of the writings mysteriously obtained on slates, under what is known as "severe test conditions," that preclude, beyond any possible doubt, any form of deception or trickery, one would think that the day of miracles had certainly returned; but we must not believe half we hear nor all that we see, for the chances are that just as you are about to attribute some unaccountable spirit phenomena to an unseen power, something turns up to show that you have been tricked by a clever device which is absurd in its simplicity.

There are a large number of methods of producing slate writing, but the writer will describe a few which will be sufficient to give an idea of the working of slate tests in general. First we have the ordinary one in which the writing is placed on the slate beforehand, and then hidden from view by a flap or loose piece of slate. (Fig. 1.) After both sides of the slate have been cleaned, the false flap is dropped on the table,

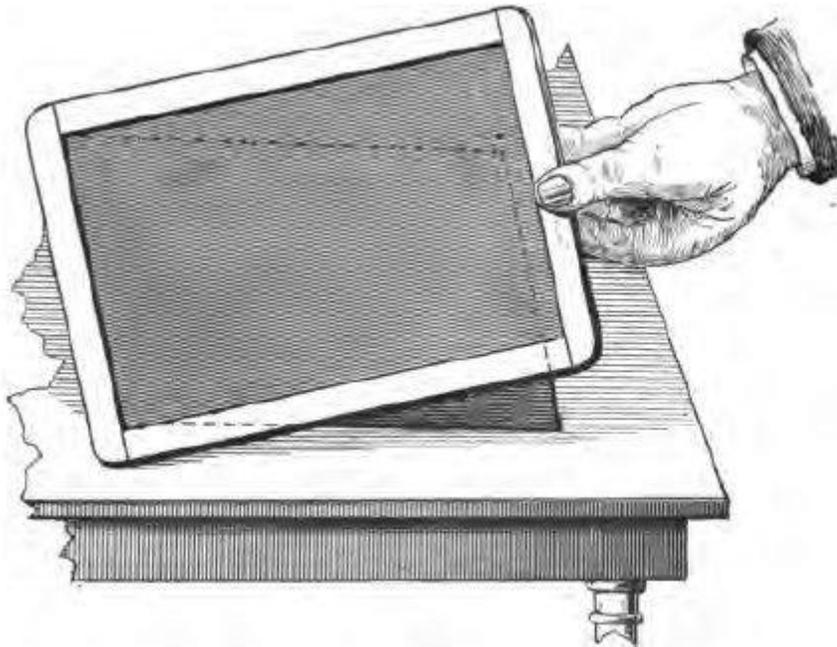


Fig. 1.—Ordinary Slate with Flap.

The side which is then uppermost being covered with cloth similar to the table top, where it will remain unnoticed or the flap is allowed to fall into a

second slate with which the first is covered. In the latter case no cloth is pasted on the flap. Sometimes the flap is covered with a piece of newspaper and is allowed to drop into a newspaper lying on the table, then the newspaper containing the flap is carelessly removed, thus doing away with any trace of trickery.

Another way of utilizing the false flap is as follows: The writing is not placed beforehand on the slate, but on the flap, which, as before, is covered with the same material as the table top. This is lying on the table writing downward. The slate is handed around for inspection, and, on being returned to the performer, he stands at the table and cleans the slate on one side, then turns it over and cleans the other. As he does so he lifts the flap into the slate. The flap is held in firmly by an edging of thin pure sheet rubber cemented on the flap between the slate and the cloth covering of the slate. This grips the wooden sides of the frame hard enough to prevent the false piece from tumbling out accidentally.

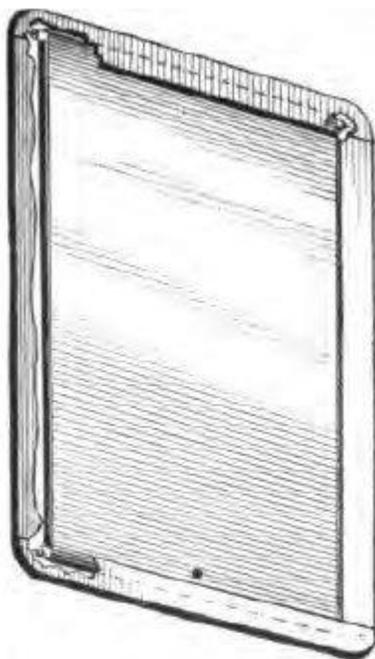
We now come to another style, wherein a slate is cleaned on both sides, and, while held in the hand facing the audience, becomes suddenly covered with writing, and the slate is immediately given for inspection. The writing is on the slate previous to the cleaning, and is hidden from view by a flap of slate colored silk, held firmly in place by a pellet of wax in each of the corners of the silk. Attached to this silk flap or covering (at the end that is nearest to the performer's sleeve) is a stout cord or string, which is also made fast to a strap around the wrist of the hand opposite to that, holding the slate. If the arms are now extended their full length, the piece of silk covering will leave the slate and pass rapidly up the sleeve out of the way, and thus leave the writing exposed to view. (Fig. 2.) The slate is found to be still a little damp



Fig. 2.—Removing the Silk from the Face of the Slate.

from the cleaning with the sponge and water it had been given previously. This is easily accounted for. The water from the sponge penetrates just enough through the cloth to dampen the slate.

There is still another slate on which we can make the writing appear suddenly. It is composed of a wooden frame, such as all wooden-edged slates have, but the slate itself is a sham. It is a piece of cloth painted with a kind of paint known as liquid, or silicate slating, which, when dry and hard, is similar to the real article. This cloth is twice the length of the slate and just the exact width. The two ends of the cloth are united with cement, so as to make an endless piece or loop. There is a small rod or roller in both the top and bottom pieces of the frame, the ends being made hollow to receive them. Over these rollers runs the cloth, stretched firmly and tightly. Just where the cloth is joined or cemented is a little black button, or stud of hard rubber or leather. This allows the cloth to be pushed up and down, bringing the back to the front; and by doing so quickly, the writing which is written on the cloth at the rear of the frame is made to come to the front in plain view. (Fig. 3.) Still another idea in a single slate is as follows: An ordinary looking slate is given out for examination, and, on its being



**Fig. 3. — The Endless
Band Silicate Trick
Slate.**

returned to the medium, he takes his handkerchief and cleans or brushes both sides of the slate with it; and, upon again showing that side of the slate first cleaned, it is found covered with writing apparently done with chalk. The following is the simple explanation of it: Take a small camel's hair brush and dip it in urine or onion juice, and with it write or trace on the slate whatever

you desire, and when it becomes dry, or nearly so, the slate can be given for examination without fear of detection. The handkerchief the performer uses to clean the slate with is lightly sprinkled with powdered chalk. He makes believe to clean the one side devoid of preparation, but the side containing the invisible writing is gently rubbed with the handkerchief, not too hard just enough to let the powdered chalk fall on the urine or onion juice, where it leaves a mark not unlike a chalk mark. It will not be out of place to describe a trick by which writing is produced upon an ordinary china plate by a somewhat similar means. The plate is examined and cleaned with a borrowed handkerchief, and then the performer requests the loan of a pinch of snuff, or uses a little sand or dust, which he places on the plate. He now commences to move the plate around in circles, and while doing so the snuff or sand is seen to gradually form itself into writing. The explanation is simple — whatever writing you desire to appear on the plate is placed beforehand on it.

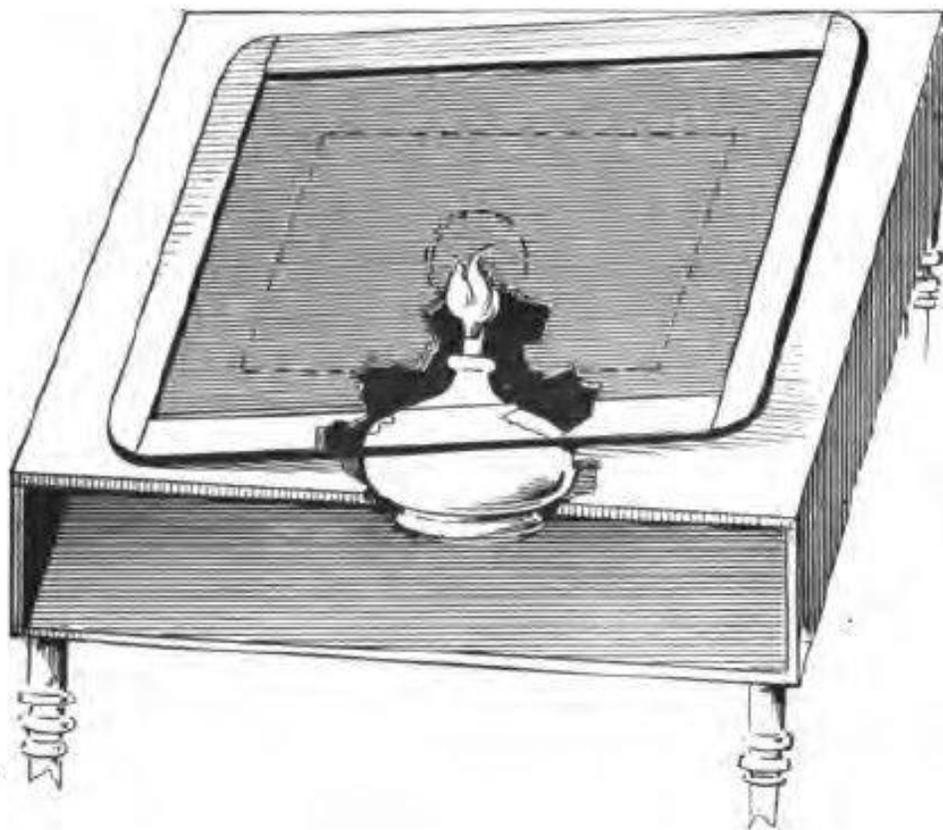
It is done with a camel's hair brush dipped in the white of an egg and allowed to become dry before being handed around for inspection. As the performer cleans the plate he breathes on both sides of it, as if to give it moisture enough to help take off any dirt that might be thereon when rubbed with the handkerchief. In breathing on the front of the plate containing the writing done with the white of the egg, he moistens the writing enough to make the snuff or sand, as the case may be, adhere to it. Of course, in cleaning the front of the plate, care must be taken not to brush or disturb the invisible writing.

It may not be amiss to also mention another method of producing writing, employed by mediums to obtain a message on a blank piece of paper which has been placed between two slates, which are held by the medium in his hand, high above his head, and, on afterwards taking the slate apart, the paper is covered with writing. This again calls into use the extra or false flap. (Fig. 1) A piece of paper with writing on it is placed face downward on one of the slates and covered with the false flap. It then looks like an ordinary slate.

On this is placed the plain piece of paper, and over this is laid the second slate. The slates are now held up in plain view of the audience, and on being lowered to the table they are turned over, thus bringing the blank piece of paper under the false flap and the one with the writing on it on the top of the flap, which has fallen from the slate, which is now the top, but originally the bottom one, on or into the under one, and, of course, on the removal of the present top slate, the writing is found on what is supposed to be the original blank paper.

If the paper is to have a private mark put on it by an observer, so as to prove the writing really does appear on that identical piece of paper, the operation is varied as follows: The false flap is done away with, and the paper, which is furnished by the medium, has written on it the desired

communication with ink, which is made visible and brought out black by means of heat. For the invisible ink you can use sulphuric acid, very much diluted, so as not to destroy the paper. The necessary heat is obtained in the following manner: The table (Fig. 4)



**Fig. 4.—False Table for Developing Communications
Written with Sympathetic Ink.**

on which the slates are resting is hollow, and has concealed in it a spirit lamp filled with alcohol. This lamp sits directly under a trap in the table top, which is covered underneath for safety with sheet iron, so it will not catch fire. When the slates are placed on the table they are laid over the little trap door, which, in conjuring parlance, is known as a "trap." This is now opened, and the slates allowed to become well heated and the trap then closed, and the prepared paper, upon coming in contact with the hot slate, is thus covered with writing.

Another medium employed a somewhat similar method, only the paper in this case was placed in a glass vial (Fig. 5) which had been lying on the iron trap door. The medium's hand covered the vial, which was corked and sealed, while the writing was making its appearance.



Fig. 5.—The Development of Spirit Writing.

You can also produce writing on the paper in the vial without resorting to the use of heat by using a vial that has been washed out with ammonia and kept well corked, and writing on the paper with a weak solution of copper sulphate, which is invisible until the paper is placed in the vial, when the two chemicals produce writing in blue. Still another message is produced as follows: The writing is done with iron sulphate on blank cards. Of course this is visible. These cards are placed in envelopes and sealed up. Upon opening the envelopes shortly afterward the cards are covered with the writing which was before invisible, but is brought out by a solution of nut galls with which the inside of the envelopes had been slightly moistened.

The subject of sympathetic inks is such an interesting one that we give thirty-seven formulas, which include all those which are liable to be used by the medium.

The solutions used should be so nearly colorless that the writing cannot be seen till the agent is applied to render it visible. Sympathetic inks are of three general classes.

Inks that Appear through Heat.

1. Write with a concentrated solution of caustic potash. The writing will appear when the paper is submitted to strong heat.

2. Write with a solution of ammonium hydrochlorate, in the proportion of 15 parts to 100. The writing will appear when the paper is heated by holding it over a stove or by passing a hot smoothing iron over it.

3. A weak solution of copper nitrate gives an invisible writing, which becomes red through heat.

4. A very dilute solution of copper per chloride gives invisible characters that become yellow through heat.

5. A slightly alcoholic solution of copper bromide gives perfectly invisible characters which are made apparent by a gentle heat, and which disappear again through cold.

6. Write upon rose colored paper with a solution of cobalt chloride. The invisible writing will become blue through heat, and will disappear on cooling.

7. Write with a solution of sulphuric acid. The characters will appear in black through heat. This ink has the disadvantage of destroying the paper. (See the caution given on page 9.)

8. Write with lemon, onion, leek, cabbage or artichoke juice. Characters written with these juices become very visible when the paper is heated.

9. Digest 1 oz. of zafire, or cobalt oxide, at a gentle heat, with 4 oz. of nitro-muriatic acid till no more is dissolved, then add 1 oz. common salt and 16 oz. of water. If this be written with and the paper held to the fire, the writing becomes green, unless the cobalt should be quite pure, in which case it will be blue. The addition of a little iron nitrate will then impart the property of becoming green. It is used in chemical landscapes for the foliage.

10. Put in a vial 1/2 oz. of distilled water, 1 drm. of potassium bromide and 1 drm. of pure copper sulphate. The solution is nearly colorless, but becomes brown when heated.

11. Nickel nitrate and nickel chloride in weak solution form an invisible ink, which becomes green by heating when the salt contains traces of cobalt, which usually is the case; when pure, it becomes yellow.

12. When the solution of acetate of protoxide of cobalt contains nickel or iron, the writing made by it will become green when heated; when it is pure and free from these metals, it becomes blue.

13. Milk makes a good invisible ink, and buttermilk answers the purpose better. It will not show if written with a clean new pen, and ironing with a hot flat iron is the best way of showing it up. All invisible inks will show on glazed paper; therefore unglazed paper should be used.

14. Burn flax so that it may be rather smoldered than burned to ashes, then grind it with a muller on a stone, putting a little alcohol to it, then mix it with a little gum water, and what you write, though it seem clear, may be rubbed or washed out.

15. Boil cobalt oxide in acetic acid. If a little common salt be added, the writing becomes green when heated, but with potassium nitrate it becomes a pale rose color.

16. A weak solution of mercury nitrate becomes black by heat.

Inks that Appear under the Influence of Light.

17. Gold chloride serves for forming characters that appear only as long as the paper is exposed to daylight, say for an hour at least.

18. Write with a solution made by dissolving one part of silver nitrate in 1,000 parts of distilled water. When submitted to daylight, the writing appears of a slate color or tawny brown.

Inks Appearing through Reagents.

19. If writing be done with a solution of lead acetate in distilled water, the characters will appear in black upon passing a solution of an alkaline sulphide over the paper.

20. Characters written with a very weak solution of gold chloride will become dark brown upon passing a solution of tin per chloride over them.

21. Characters written with a solution of gallic acid in water will become black through a solution of iron sulphate and brown through the alkalies.

22. Upon writing on paper that contains but little sizing with a very clear solution of starch, and submitting the dry characters to the vapor of iodine, or passing over them a weak solution of potassium iodide, the writing becomes blue, and disappears under the action of a solution of sodium hyposulphite in the proportions of 1 to 1,000.

23. Characters written with a 10 per cent, solution of nitrate of protoxide of mercury become black when the paper is moistened with liquid ammonia, and gray through heat.

24. Characters written with a weak solution of the soluble platinum or iridium chloride become black when the paper is submitted to mercurial vapor. This ink may be used for marking linen. It is indelible.

25. C. Widemann communicates a new method of making an invisible ink to *Die Natur*. To make the writing or the drawing appear which has been made upon paper with the ink, it is sufficient to dip it into water. On drying, the traces disappear again, and reappear by each succeeding immersion. The ink is made by intimately mixing linseed oil, 1 part; water of ammonia, 20 parts; water, 100 parts. The mixture must be agitated each time before the pen is dipped into it, as a little of the oil may separate and float on top, which would, of course, leave an oily stain upon the paper.

26. Write with a solution of potassium ferrocyanide, develop by pressing over the dry, invisible characters a piece of blotting paper moistened with a solution of copper sulphate or of iron sulphate.

27. Write with pure dilute tincture of iron; develop with a blotter moistened with strong tea.

28. Writing with potassium iodide and starch becomes blue by the least trace of acid vapors in the atmosphere or by the presence of ozone. To make it, boil starch, and add a small quantity of potassium iodide in solution.

29. Copper sulphate in very dilute solution will produce an invisible writing, which will turn light blue by vapors of ammonia.

30. Soluble compounds of antimony will become red by hydrogen sulphide vapor.

31. Soluble compounds of arsenic and of tin peroxide will become yellow by the same vapor.

32. An acid solution of iron chloride is diluted till the writing is invisible when dry. This writing has the remarkable property of becoming red by sulphocyanide vapors (arising from the action of sulphuric acid on potassium sulphocyanide in a long necked flask), and it disappears by ammonia, and may alternately be made to appear and disappear by these two vapors.

33. Writing executed with rice water is visible when dry, but the characters become blue by the application of iodine. This ink was much employed during the Indian mutiny.

34. Write with a solution of paraffin in benzol. When the solvent has evaporated, the paraffin is invisible, but becomes visible on being dusted with lampblack or powdered graphite, or smoking over a candle flame.

35. *To Write Black Characters with Water.*— Mix 10 parts nutgalls, 2-1/2 parts calcined iron sulphate. Dry thoroughly, and reduce to fine powder. Rub this powder over the surface of the paper and force into the pores by powerful pressure, brush off the loose powder. A pen dipped in water will write black on paper thus treated.

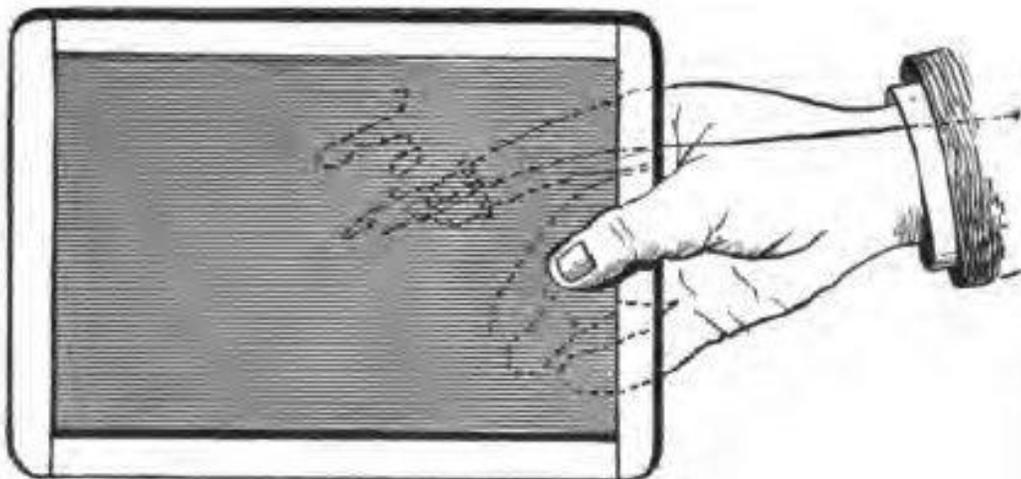
36. *To Write Blue Characters with Water.*— Mix iron sesquisulphate and potassium ferrocyanide. Prepare the paper in the same manner as for writing black characters with water. Write with water and the characters will appear blue.

37. *To Produce Brown Writing with Water.*— Mix copper sulphate and potassium ferrocyanide. Prepare the paper in the same manner as before. The characters written with water will be reddish brown.

Here is another trick calling for the use of sympathetic ink. A medium suggests a number of questions to write on a paper, one of which you select and write on a slip of paper furnished by the medium. Writing is done with pen and ink. You are requested to dry it with a blotter, and not to remove the blotter for a time, the medium says, so as to keep the paper in the dark, thus giving the "spirits" better conditions under which to work. After a while the blotter is removed, and an answer to the question is found on the same paper. The questions suggested were all of such a character that one answer would nearly do for any one. The paper the question was written on had this answer written with invisible ink brought out by a reagent on the blotter, with which it was saturated, and thus another mystery is easily dispelled.

We will now take up a few slate tests, in which the slates are brought or furnished by the spectator or investigator. The tests in which the slates are brought by skeptics and tied and sealed by them, and still writing is obtained upon them, are the ones that are the most convincing and most talked about, and they are offered to the unbeliever as proof absolute of spirit power.

First we will begin with the single slate which has just been handed to the medium, after being thoroughly cleaned by the person bringing it. The skeptic holds one end of the slate in one hand and the medium the opposite end in one of his hands, and both persons clasp their disengaged hands. In a short time the slate is turned over and a few words written in a scrawling style are found. I must acknowledge that when I first witnessed this test it somewhat staggered me, but afterward, on seeing it the second time, I was enabled to fathom its mystery. It is patterned somewhat after the style claimed to have been used by Slade, wherein he used a piece of slate pencil fastened to a thimble, and with apparatus attached to his forefinger of the same hand holding the slate he did the writing. The thimble (Fig. 6) was fastened to an



**Fig. 6.—Writing on the Slate with the Pencil
Thimble.**

elastic which pulled the thimble out of sight up the sleeve or under the coat when it was done with. But it always required a little scheming and maneuvering both to use and conceal the device and get rid of it, and there was always the fear of being detected with this bit of machinery about the person; so someone of an ingenious turn of mind hit upon another method.

There are some slate pencils made the same as lead pencils, that is, a very small piece of slate pencil, about the size of a match, is enclosed in the wood after the manner of lead pencils. A tiny piece of this pencil is placed at the tip of the forefinger and over it is placed a piece of flesh-colored court plaster well fastened to the finger (Fig. 7) and well blended in with aniline dye with the finger, so both are exactly the same color.

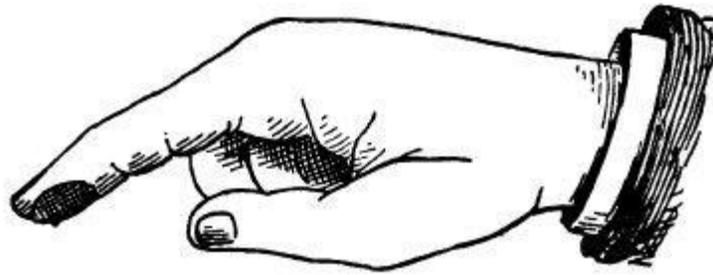


Fig. 7.—The Prepared Finger.

After everything becomes dry and hard a little hole is made in the court plaster, so as to allow the point of the piece of pencil to come through enough to mark on the slate. The finger thus prepared is what does the writing. The message or name must be written backward, so that when the slate is reversed it will appear in its correct position. To learn to do this quickly, stand in front of a looking-glass with the slate in your hand and watch your writing in the glass as you go along. You do not need to hold the slate underneath the table in this test; hold it in the air with a handkerchief over it, so as to disguise the movement of the finger. The message must necessarily be short, on account of the radius through which the medium's finger can travel.

We now come to another method of using the single slate. The medium takes the slate and places it on the table and requests the spectator to write a question on a piece of paper. He, the medium, gains knowledge of the contents of the paper in various ways; one is by using a pad of paper which contains underneath the second or third layer of paper a carbon sheet made of wax and lampblack. Whatever is written on the first sheet of paper will be transferred or copied by means of the carbon paper to the sheet underneath it.

Another way is by requesting a person to fold the paper and hold it against his head, and, under the pretense of showing the person how to hold it, exchange it for a paper of his own folded in like manner. This exchanged paper is then opened and read by the medium while his hand is below the level of the table top, and while he is holding a conversation with the auditor. After it is read, the paper is again folded and kept in the performer's lap until needed.

As he now knows the contents of the paper, he can frame in his mind a suitable answer. He remarks: "I will ask the spirits first to give you a decided answer, through me as an independent trance slate writing medium, whether they will answer your question during this sitting."

So the medium takes a pencil in hand and writes on one side of the slate, apparently under spirit control, and then on the other side. The message is read, and it says the conditions are very favorable, and no doubt, if the skeptic will place the utmost confidence in the medium, there will be satisfactory results.

After the slate has been shown with both sides covered with writing, it is thoroughly cleaned and placed on the table. The medium now picks up the original paper from his lap and asks the person to give him the paper he is holding. This the medium apparently places under the slate; however, he really holds this one back and introduces the one he has had in his hand, which is the one originally written upon. He has now his own paper in his hand, and the one with the question is under the slate.

On the slate being turned over in a short time, it is covered with writing, forming a sensible reply to the question on the paper, which is now opened and read to compare it with the answer.

All that remains to be explained is how the writing on the slate appeared there. The false flap is again used, but in a directly opposite manner to which it has been employed heretofore. One side of this flap is covered with a portion of the writing that the medium first wrote under spirit control.

Let us say the first half supposed to have been written on the one side of the slate, and which he afterward reads off in connection with that written on the last or second side of the slate. What he really wrote on the first half of the slate was a correct answer to the question, and after he turns the slate over to write on the opposite side he slips the false flap over the answer on the slate.

Of course it is what is on this false flap and on the other side of the slate that the spectator really reads, and when the slate is cleaned it is this flap and the opposite side of the slate. The writing, covered by the flap, which is the answer to the question, is never seen or touched until after the flap is allowed to drop into the medium's lap. The slate can be examined; and, of course, no trickery can be found in connection with it. The method described above, in the hands of a calm and cool person, is a convincing one, and never fails to satisfy the most exacting of skeptics.

I wish to remark that, if any person tells you he took two slates of his own to a medium, thoroughly well tied or sealed, and that the slates never left his (the skeptic's) hands, and that there was writing obtained upon the interior surface of the slates under those conditions, he was sadly mistaken, and has failed to keep track of everything that actually took place at the time of the sitting.

Suppose two slates tied together are brought to the medium. Both he and the stranger sit at a table. The slates are held under the table, the medium grasping one corner and the skeptic the opposite corner, each with one hand, and the disengaged hands clasped together above the table.

After a while the slates are laid upon the table, the string untied, the slates taken apart, but no writing is found. The medium states it must have been because there was no slate pencil between them.

So a small piece of pencil is placed between the slates, and again they are tied with the cord by the medium, and he again passes them under the table, both persons holding the slates as before.

Presently writing is heard, and, upon the skeptic bringing the slates from under the table and untying the cord himself, he finds one of the slates covered with writing, although but shortly before they were devoid of even a scratch.

Here is the explanation: The medium does not pass the slates under the table the first time, but drops them in his lap, with the side on which the string is tied or knotted downward, and really passes a set of his own for the skeptic to hold; he (the medium) supporting his end by pressing against the table with his knee, which leaves his hand disengaged. There is a slate pencil, called the soapstone pencil, which is softer than the ordinary.

This is the one used by the medium. He now covers the face of the slate which is uppermost in his lap with writing, doing so very quietly and without any noise. Now, as he brings the slates above the table, he leaves his own in his lap and brings up the skeptic's with the writing side down. The slates are untied and taken apart and shown, devoid of writing upon the inside, which he claims was caused by not having any slate pencil inside.

The medium now places the pencil upon the slate which was originally the upper one, and covers this with what was the bottom slate, which is covered with the writing inside on the back or bottom of slate.* This maneuver or action brings the slate on top with the writing upon its inside. Nothing could be more simple and natural.

The slates are again tied together, and in doing so the slates are turned over, bringing the slate containing the writing, still upon the inside, at the bottom instead of the top, and the string tied or knotted above the top slate. Of course, when again separated, the writing is found upon the inside of the lower slate. When the slates are passed under the table the second time, the spectator himself is allowed to do this, and the medium, with one of his finger nails, while holding his end of the slate, produces a scratching noise on the slate closely resembling the tracing of a pencil. It is not really necessary to pass the slates under the table the second time, but they can be held above it if preferred.

Now, suppose two slates are brought that are riveted or screwed or sealed at the four corners. How can writing be obtained upon them without disturbing any of the above arrangements? The slates are held under the table in the same manner as in previous tests. To produce the writing upon the slates the medium is provided with a few simple, though effective devices, one of which is a little hard wood tapering wedge, and a piece of thin steel wire, to one end of which is fastened a tiny piece of slate pencil. An old umbrella rib will be found to work admirably, because there is a small clasp at

one end and at its other end a small eye. The pencil is made to fit into the end with the clasp. Now take the wooden wedge and push it between the wooden frames of the slates at the sides. The frames and slates will give enough to allow the wire and pencil to be inserted and the writing be accomplished with it, after which the wire is withdrawn, and then also the wooden wedge, and all is done without leaving any trace or mark behind as to how it is all performed. (Fig. 8.)

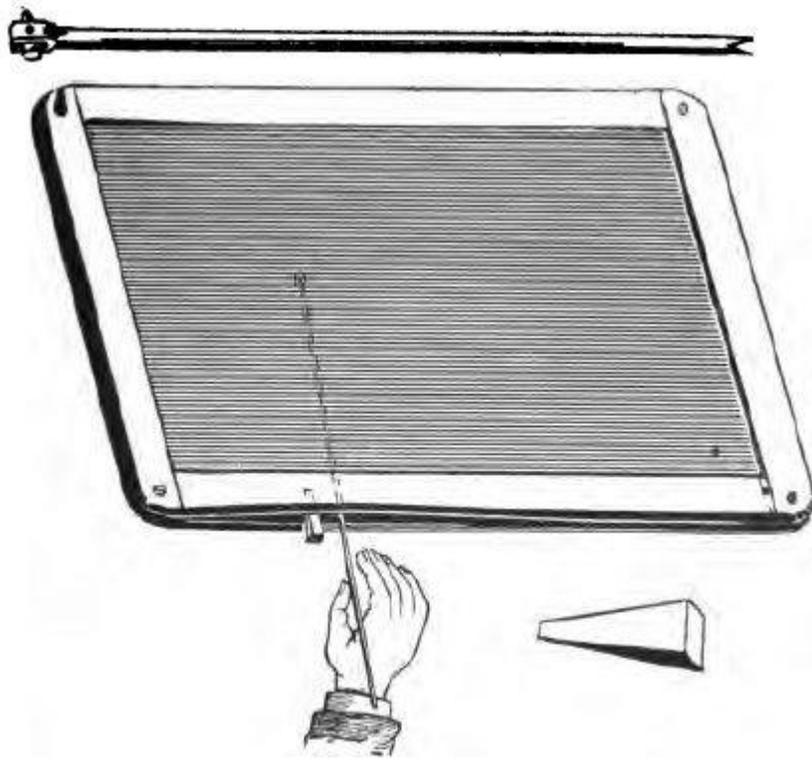


Fig. 8.—Wedging Apart the Slates.

A well known conjuror at one time made a remark that he could duplicate any slate writing test he ever witnessed, he having publicly declared, time and time again, the slate writing test to be a fraud. He gave a test in private at his own home and hit upon a rather unique idea. A slate would be cleaned on both sides and a private mark placed on it, and the slate allowed to lie flat on the table, and the magician and the committee sat around it and placed their hands upon the slate. Presently writing was heard, and upon lifting the slate the side underneath was found covered with writing. The table was a kitchen table with the ordinary hanging cloth cover, or table cloth. The table had a double top with room enough between the two to conceal a small boy. There was a neatly made trap in both the table cloth and the top of the table; the cloth being glued around the opening to keep it in place. The trap door opened downwards. The boy concealed in the table opened the trap door and did the necessary writing on the slate, and closed the opening.

The idea of having the committee hold their hands on the slate was to prevent the slate from being accidentally moved by the boy when writing. The above idea was improved upon by doing away with the use of the boy and the double top of the table. The trap in the cloth and table top was still used. But the test was done with the lights turned out or down low, and the medium had a confederate sitting at his right hand side. This allowed the medium to take away his right hand, introduce it under the table, open the trap, do the writing, shut the trap, replace his hand, and on the lights being turned up the writing is found. It should be stated that the medium and committee sat around the table with their hands resting on the slate, and each person's hand touching that of his neighbor; so neither could move without the other being aware of the fact, but the medium's right hand neighbor, being one of his confederates, allows him to take his (the medium's) hand away without any one being the wiser.

I will now describe how the writing is obtained upon the interior of two slates sealed together, and all hands placed on them, and without the assistance of a confederate. The table is the same as previously described, that is, it contains the trap. The slates are two single ones hinged together and sealed around the edges in any manner the committee may see fit. One of the slates is a trick slate made in this fashion: The slate part itself is made to work on a pivot or hinge along one of its sides. (Fig. 9.) The side opposite to where both slates are hinged

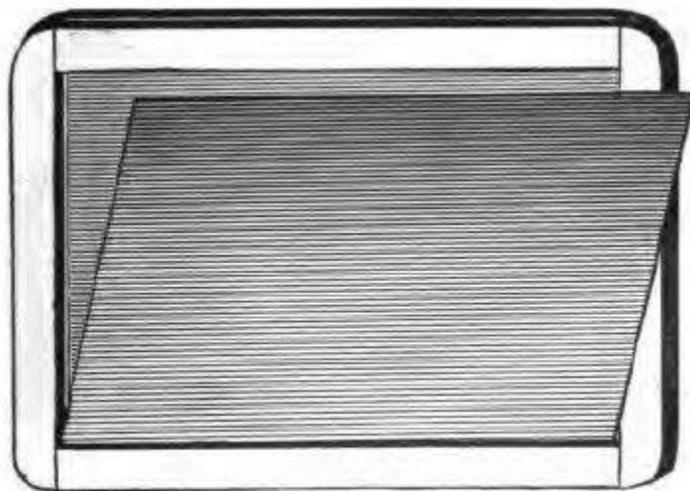


Fig. 9.—The Trick Slate.

together, by touching a portion of the hinges that hold the two slates together, a catch concealed in the wooden framework is released, which allows the slate part itself to drop down on its own hinge or pivot. So when the slates are placed on the table they are put directly over the trap in the table, and with the hinges of the two slates toward the medium. The medium, as he places

the slates over the trap in the table, pushes the hinge releasing the catch, which allows the underneath slate to drop as far as the table. Now, when the trap in the table is opened, the slate opens or drops far enough for the medium to write on that part, also on the slate above it. He closes both the slate and the table, and the slates, upon being unsealed, are found covered with writing. The only thing that remains to be explained is how the medium gets his hand free to do the writing without being detected. The lamp or gas jet is close to the medium's right hand, where he can reach it. Now, all the persons are seated around the table with their hands on the slates, and each other's hands or fingers touching one another. The medium takes his right hand away to turn down the light, and his next door neighbor, as soon as the light goes out, feels his (the medium's) hand or finger replaced. At least, so he thinks. What really happens is this: The thumb of the medium's left hand is stretched far enough over to touch the hand or finger of the person sitting on the performer's right hand side. (Fig. 10.)



Fig. 10.—The Medium Holding the Two Skeptics' Hands.

The medium immediately goes to work and produces the writing, and when finished, just as he goes to relight the gas or lamp, he removes the left thumb to create the impression that he has just taken his right hand away again for the light.

Here is a trick I once saw a medium do. He had a number of slates piled on top of the table; he would clean these, one at a time, showing each, and after they had been thoroughly examined, he placed them on the floor.

He would then pick them all up together and replace them on the table, and select two of them, put them together, holding them in his hand above his head, would shortly separate them and show one covered with writing. The slates were devoid of all trickery, as was easily proved in allowing them to be thoroughly examined.

The explanation is as follows: The floor was covered with carpet. In this there was a slit or cut just large enough to pass or draw a slate through.

A slate with writing on one side is previously placed under the carpet, with that side down, (Fig. 11.)

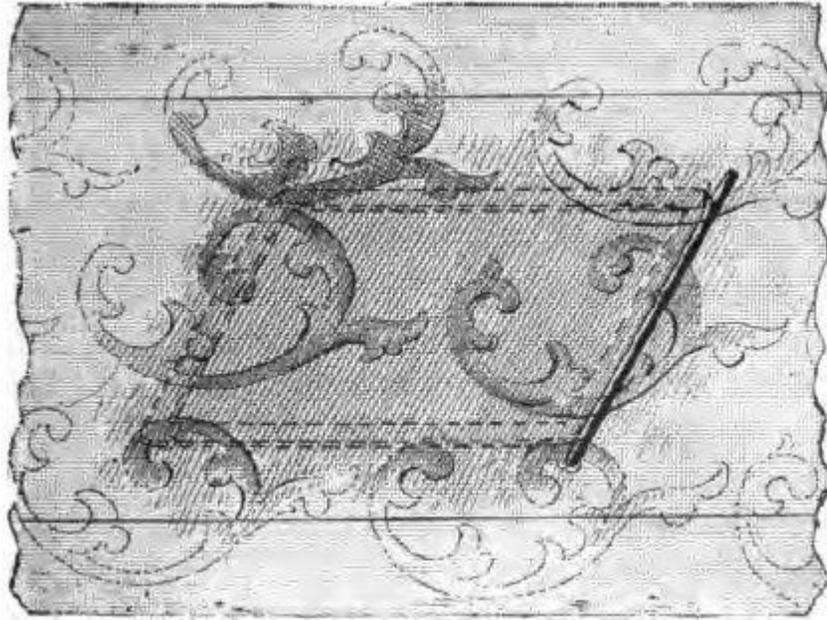


Fig. 11.—The Slate under the Carpet.

The slates, as they are cleaned, are laid on the carpet immediately over or near this concealed one, and, on lifting the slates from the floor, this one is also carried with them, and all placed on the table.

Of course, it is this slate and one of the prepared ones that are afterward used. There is little likelihood of any one taking notice of there being one more slate in the pile.

Some mediums use two single slates, and, after cleaning them on both sides, hold one in each hand. They sit a little way from the table and place the right hand, with the slate, under the chair, as if to draw the chair closer to the table. What the medium really accomplishes is an exchange of slates. There is a little shelf, or drawer, under the seat of the chair. On this lies a slate, one side of which is prepared with writing. The medium picks up the slate and leaves behind in its place the one held in his right hand as he moves the chair. This is a method used to a considerable extent and always successfully.

The following is a clever ruse, oftentimes used by mediums to destroy all traces of the use of the false flap when it is employed. It is the test where the flap is used to cover the writing on one slate, and then that slate is covered with another. Now, if the slates are turned over or reversed, the writing is uncovered and the flap remains in the opposite or underneath slate. Now, to get rid of that flap, the medium deliberately presses his knee against that

slate, breaking not only the slate, but also the flap contained in it. The broken flap mingles in with the broken slate, and nobody is any the wiser. Nobody for a moment thinks of picking up the pieces to see if there are one or more slates. Of course, when the slates are broken, it is done secretly under the table, and the medium remarks: "The spirit force is so strong it has smashed the slate." A test with a single slate that I once saw done was rather neat in its way, and I think it worth describing. The slate was examined and cleaned on both sides, and placed on a small table covered with a little fancy cloth. On lifting the slate afterward, it's underneath side was found with writing on it. The top of the table was no larger than the slate. When the slate was laid on the table, the medium remarked: "To convince you there is no trickery about the table, I will remove the cloth;" which he did, with the slate still on or in it, and then replaced the slate and cloth. Now, on this table top was resting another slate covered with writing on one side, and that side upward, and this covered with the table cloth. When the medium picked up the cloth and the slate, which had just been cleaned, he also carried along the second slate with it, which was under the cloth, and in replacing the cloth he simply reversed the sides, laying the first slate on the table, where it was covered by the cloth, and the second one was thus brought to view. It is astonishing how such barefaced and simple devices will deceive the spectator. It is the boldness and air of conviction of his assertions that carry a medium's test successfully through.

CHAPTER II. The Double Slate.

We now come to a slate called by the mediums "The double slate." It is, to all appearances, two ordinary slates hinged together at one side and locked with a padlock, the shackle of which passes through a hole in the sides of the frame of each slate. This slate also contains the false flap or slate, but the slate or flap is held firmly in each frame as follows: The inside edges of both ends of each frame of the slates are beveled inward a trifle. One of these ends of each slate frame is also made to slide or pull out about one-quarter of an inch. These are prevented from sliding until wanted by the medium by a catch in the framework, which is connected with a screw in one of the hinges.

This screw stands a little higher than the rest, so as to be easily found. The hinges are on the outside of the frame instead of inside. By pressing this screw it undoes the catch, which allows the ends to be moved a trifle. The false flap is just large enough to fill in the space under the bevels of the frame, and if, in the top frame, the catch is released and the end moved, the flap will drop into the bottom slate, where it is held tight and firm by releasing the catch in that frame, moving the end until the flap settles into its place and then sending the end back into its original place again. The writing is placed beforehand on one side of the flap and on one slate, both the written sides

face to face, and after the flap has changed slates it presents two slates with written sides.

There is still another double slate used with hinges and padlock. (Fig. 12.) One of the ends of the wooden frame of one slate is fastened securely to its slate, which is made to slide out completely from the groove in the frame.

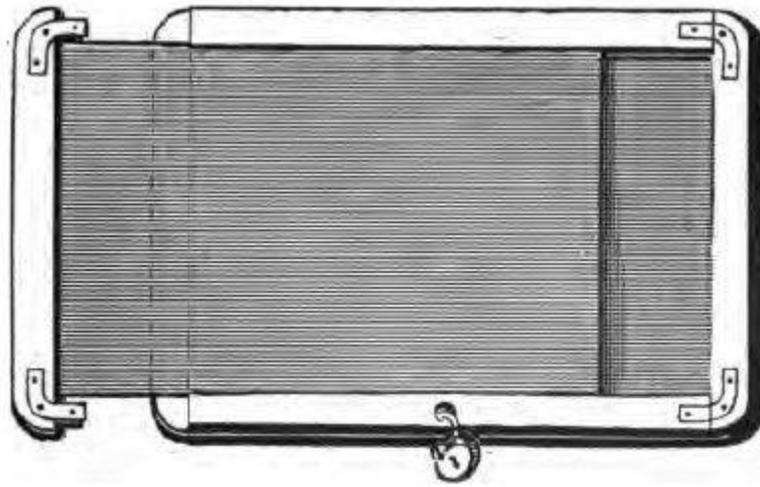


Fig. 12.—The Sliding Trick Slates.

This allows the insides of both slates to be written upon. After that is done the slate is slid back into its frame. Care should be taken, in sliding the piece back, not to reverse it so as to bring the writing side out. The best way is not to pull the slate completely out, and write upon the inside of the stationary slate, and then reverse the slates, which will bring the inside of the movable slate into view. Write on that and then close the slate.

I have seen a medium use the double or folding slate and get rid of the false flap in this way: He used a pair of small slates. These he opened out with the flat side towards the audience, and while in his hand, cleaned those two sides away from the table. He now showed the reverse sides and cleaned them likewise. He now closed the slates, but toward him, instead of away from him, holding them close to his body, and as he does so, the false flap, by this movement, slips easily and unperceived beneath his coat or vest.

I once witnessed a test which, for a time, completely nonplussed me, but, after considerable study and experimenting, I solved it.

This is the effect of the test: A person was allowed to bring two slates; he was to wash them himself and securely seal them in the presence of the medium, the medium placing, before the slates were sealed, a piece of chalk between them. The slates were sealed after this fashion: Around the whole length and width of the slates court plaster was stuck, and that was also sealed to the slates with sealing wax, making it an utter impossibility to insert a piece of wire, or like substance, between the slates. Nevertheless, the slates were held under the table and presently removed, unsealed, and writing in a

very poor hand found upon the inner surface of one of the slates. It could hardly be called -writing, being hardly more than a scrawl.

Now, how can this be accounted for? By one of the simplest devices imaginable. The medium placed the piece of chalk between the slates. This was composed of pulverized chalk, mixed with a little water, glue and iron filings, and allowed to become hard. The medium, while under cover of the table, traced with a magnet below the slate the words found upon the inside, but backward, the same as type is set for printing; if not, the writing on the slate will be in reverse. The chalk, on account of the iron filings it contains, follows the direction of the magnet. (Fig. 13.) We now come to another idea with two slates. Have two slates made with fairly deep wooden frames, deep

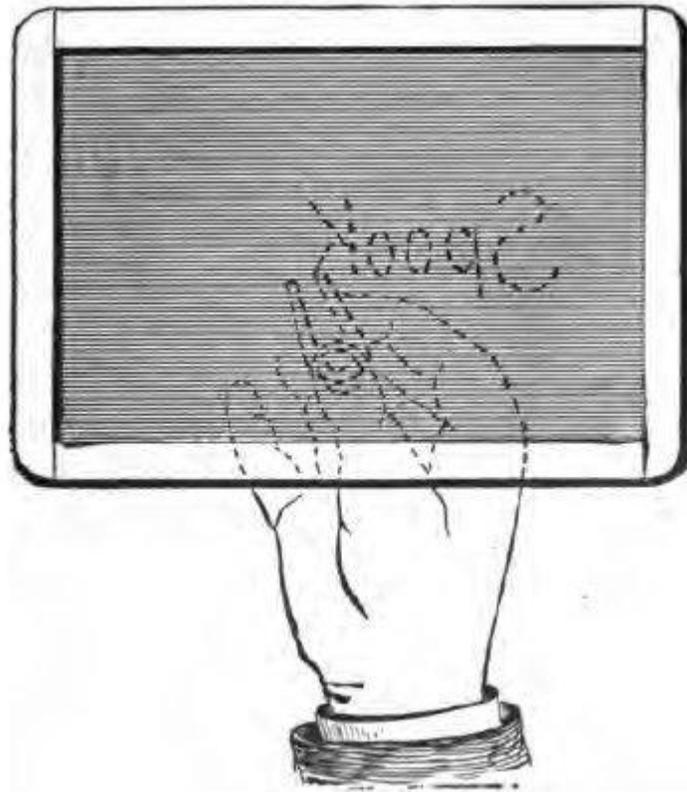
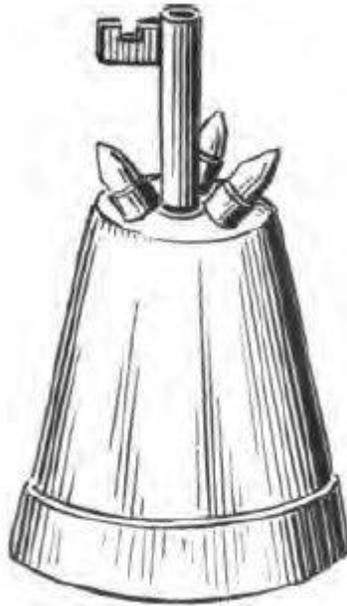


Fig. 13.—Magnetic Writing.

enough to hold the slate proper and a false flap of slate. One made of silicate book-slate stuff is preferable. Your apparatus consists now of two slates and one false flap. The false flap is made to fit very tightly, so it will not fall out of its own weight. The slates in the frame also fit snugly. The frames are mortised out a little thicker than the slate, say twice as thick. This allows the slate to work backward and forward, from front to back, and vice versa. If the slate is well pushed down and the flap placed on it, the flap will not fall out, but if you press the slate on the back forward, it shoves out the flap, and if it is covered with the other or second slate during this operation, it is forced into the second slate, which holds it firm and secure.

Another test, which was supposed to be convincing to skeptics, was one in which a double slate was used; it was hinged and provided with a lock in the wooden frame. The slates were examined, locked, and the key given to the skeptic. The skeptic was allowed to select from a number of pieces of colored chalk the color that he desired the message to be written in. Upon the slates being unlocked and opened, the writing is found in the color selected. While the slates are being examined, the medium seizes a duplicate key which fits the performer's right thumb; also attached lengthwise to the key are several



**Fig. 14.—The Thimble
Carrying False Key
and Chalks.**

small colored pencils or crayons of different lengths. When the slate has been examined, it is placed under the top of the table and held in position by the thumb of the right hand, which is underneath, and the fingers above the table. During this manipulation the thimble is placed on the thumb, and the performer, with the key attached to it, opens the slate, using his knee to assist or support the slate. One part of the slate opens downward and rests on the knee, which holds it in position, i.e., at an incline, pressing it against the table top. On this part of the slate the writing is now done with the colored crayon selected, which are usually red, blue, green and white. When the color of the crayon is selected the performer turns the thimble around, bringing that color upward. Although not easy to execute, it is, nevertheless, a most surprising and effective test.

The above test was used by a medium very successfully for years in England and France, and was found out recently.

A test I once received was, I thought, quite clever. I was asked to write a question on a piece of paper furnished by myself and place it between two slates without the wooden frames. The medium said I would in a short time receive an answer. He then opened the slates, stating the answer must be there, but none was found. He remarked that perhaps we did not give the spirits time enough. So he replaced the slates together with the paper containing the question between. Again, on taking the slates apart, they were devoid of writing, but, strange to say, the answer in what looked like lead pencil was found on the paper containing the question. When the slates were removed the first time, the medium got a glimpse of the question on the piece of paper and then gave me one slate to examine, and apparently was looking at the other one himself. What he really was doing was this: On the side of the slate toward him he was writing a brief answer to my question with a pencil composed of mutton tallow and lampblack pressed very hard. This pencil was attached to his thumb. He held the slate at the ends with both hands, thumbs behind and fingers in front, the writing being done backward. When the slates were replaced the writing, being black, was not seen against the black slate, and was placed immediately over the paper and the writing transferred to it. This is the reason the slates were used without the wooden frame, because with the frame the two slates would not come close together to press hard enough to transfer the answer.

A test, using a half dozen or so of slates, is as follows: Two slates are cleaned and examined and given to be held together by a skeptic, and the other slates cleaned on both sides and placed on the table. The medium now takes the two slates apart, but no writing is found; one slate is given to the skeptic and the other is placed on the table by the medium, who picks up another slate and places that with the one held by the unbeliever. After a short time the slates are again removed by the medium and no writing is found. As if in despair, the medium takes one slate away, placing it on the table, picks up another, showing both sides, places it with the one in the spectator's hand, and in a little while the skeptic himself separates the slates and writing is found on one of them.

This method brings in use again the slate with a false flap. This slate is among the others on the table. The two slates first given to the individual to hold are all right when the medium takes one slate away and places it on the table the first time and picks up another slate to place it with the one held by the skeptic. It is the flap slate, and this he places underneath the other slate and asks the skeptic to hold them. When the medium again separates the slates he turns them over, bringing the slate with the writing uppermost and also allowing the flap to fall into the lower slate, which is now taken away to be replaced by another taken from the table. Care is taken not to show the underneath side of the upper slate during this transaction. The slates the

skeptic now holds are devoid of trickery, and when exposed with the writing on will cause wonderment.

There is still another style of slate made, and used to good advantage. It is two slates hinged together, making a double slate. It has also two holes in the frame opposite to the hinges, through which tape or cord can be run and tied and sealed to the slates. (Fig. 15.)

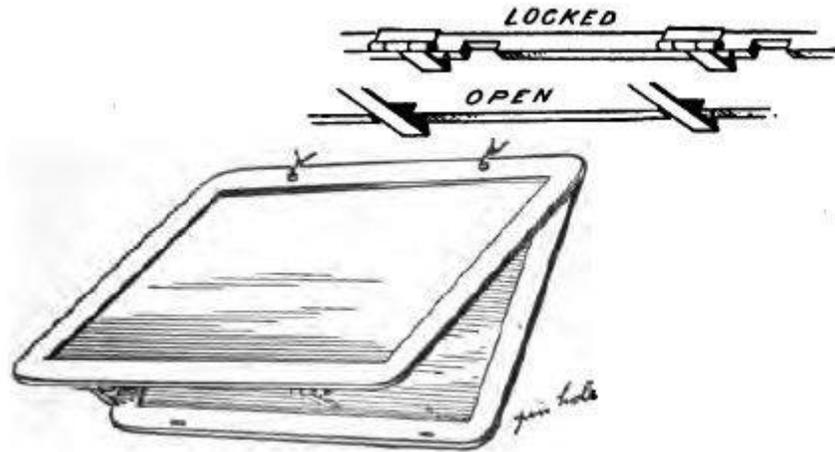


Fig. 15.—Slate with False Hinges.

The secret of getting the writing upon the inside lies in the fact that at least one-half of each hinge is screwed to the slate; the other half is made fast to a little projecting piece in which there is a slight notch. These projections enter corresponding holes in the other slate, in which is concealed a spring bolt which engages these catches of the hinge. This bolt is shoved back to release the catches by means of a pin pushed through a hole in the end of the frame.

CHAPTER III.

Miscellaneous Slate Tests.

At a public test or seance given by a medium I saw the following clever trick performed: A slate clean on both sides, to all appearances, and, of course, devoid of writing, was given to a spectator to hold above his head. The medium then loaded a pistol, putting in, instead of a bullet, a piece of chalk, which he rammed well in. He then took careful aim at the slate, fired away, and the slate was covered with writing from the chalk that was placed in the pistol. The medium, beforehand, allows anyone in the audience to choose from a plate containing different colored chalks the colors they desire. The chalk is all right, and is actually placed in the pistol and crushed to a powder by the ramrod. The slate has been written on one side with glycerine. This side of the slate is supposed to be cleaned, so as to keep clear of the glycerine, in order that the invisible writing may not be disturbed. It is this prepared side that faces the medium when he fires the pistol. The powdered chalk adheres to the glycerine, and thus we make clear another slate miracle.

A clever trick employed to deceive me on one occasion was as follows: I was handed a slate and a damp sponge, with a request to cleanse the slate. I did so, and handed it back to the medium, who held it in plain view in one hand.

In a short time the slate was given back to me with writing on it that could not be produced by any of the methods I was already acquainted with. I witnessed this test a second time, and it was only by accident that I discovered it, and all through the breaking of a string, to which the device employed was attached. The apparatus was a strip of narrow wood, nearly the length of the slate. Glued on it were raised letters of cork (felt would do also). These letters were in reverse, and were well rubbed with soft chalk. This strip of wood was attached to a cord running up the left sleeve, across the back, and down the right armhole, and thence under the vest and the end fastened to a button. The length of the string allowed the wood to hang behind the slate when held in the left hand. To keep the wood up in the sleeve until wanted, there was a loop on the string far enough up to suit the purpose.

This loop was slipped over the button, where it could be easily detached with the right hand. The sponge was soaked in water containing alum, which makes the chalk adhere better to the slate. When the slate was handed to the medium, he held it downward in his left hand, and allowed the strip of wood to slip down behind it, when it was pressed firmly against the surface of the slate, and then pulled up into the sleeve again, out of sight. This same idea has been utilized in using a blotter, the same as is used for ink, to dry the slate with. The blotter has the writing done on it with chalk, thus doing away with the strip of wood.

Take a slate and cover it with writing on one side. Cover this writing with a piece of slate-colored silk, held in the corners lightly with wax. At one end of this silk have a few minute hooks. The slate is now cleaned on both sides, and, placing the slate on the floor, the piece of silk is allowed to attach itself by means of the hooks to the medium's pants, or dress, as the case may be, thus leaving the slate devoid of trickery. It is hardly necessary to remark that the slate is placed on the floor written side downward.

A friend of mine told me of a medium he once went to see, who gave him a most remarkable test. He brought his own slate, and, as he afterward said, there could have been no trick about it. The medium took the slate for a moment, and with a pencil covered the slate with writing on both sides, just to see, so he said, if it would be good enough for the test. He then cleaned off the slate on both sides and gave it back to my friend, requesting him to hold it close against his breast, and then in a short time remove it, and, when he did so, he was thunderstruck to find writing on it on the side nearest to him. This struck me as being a most astounding proof of spirit writing. I had a meeting with the medium, who gave me the same test. It seemed strange to me that he should want my slate to write on and wash it off again, for the same reason as

he gave my friend, and that was to see "if it was good enough for the spirits to work with." I received a message on the slate, after it was washed, and saw that there was none on there after it was cleaned and handed to me. I went home puzzled, and experimented to no avail. I had another sitting with the medium, but he did not give me the same test; so I returned home again and tried to fathom the mystery, and was eventually successful. The trick was mainly in the pencil. It was pointed at both ends. (Fig. 16.) One end was a genuine slate pencil, the other end was a silver nitrate, or caustic pencil. In writing on the slate he wrote the lines quite a little distance apart with the slate pencil; in between these lines he wrote with the caustic pencil, the writing of which was invisible.



Fig. 16.—The Caustic Trick Pencil.

The sponge the slate was cleaned with, was dipped in salt water. That part of the slate containing the writing done with the silver nitrate was just lightly tapped with the sponge the rest of the slate was thoroughly cleaned. The salt water, when the slate becomes dry, brings out the silver nitrate white like a slate pencil mark. I consider this trick as ingenious and clever a one as it has been my good fortune to witness, and one that caused me much mental effort to solve.

Here is another test. A slate just cleaned and marked is placed under the table on the floor. The medium and the skeptic grasp each other's hands across the table. In a few seconds the slate is taken up from the floor and is found with writing on it. The solution of this, like all the rest of the slate phenomena, rests in simplicity and boldness. The medium wears slippers or low-cut shoes, that he can slip his foot out of easily. His stocking on his right foot is cut away so as to leave the toes bare. Now, attached to his great toe is a bit of pencil, and with this the writing is done. (Fig. 17.) Sometimes the test is varied. Five or six pieces of chalk of different colors are on the table, and the



Fig. 17.—Writing with the Toes.

investigator is allowed to select one, place it on the slate. In this case the chalk is held between the great and adjoining toe, and the writing is thus produced. It is surprising to see, with a little practice, what you can educate the foot to do. I myself can easily pick a pin off the floor and write quite well. Sometimes, by way of variation, instead of the medium or investigator lifting the slate from the floor, it is seen to mysteriously make its appearance above the edge of the table, being lifted there by means of the toes of the medium's foot. Another method used is that of scratching the writing on the slate with any metal instrument and then wash the slate on both sides, being careful not to show the scratched side until it is wet from the washing. In this condition a casual glance will reveal nothing, but as soon as the slate become dry the writing or scratching appears. Writing has also been made to appear on a slate on the table while the medium and investigator sit with both hands clasped across the table. The medium accomplished this by the simple means of a pencil concealed in his mouth. At the proper moment he holds it between his teeth, leans his head over and writes on the slate. Of course this is all done in the dark, and the writing is not very good, but it answers the purpose, and that is all that is necessary.

Here is still another test. A person writes a question on the slate and places it, written side down, on the table. All this when the medium is not looking. The medium takes his seat at the table, places one hand on the slate (so does the skeptic, the other hand on the medium's forehead). With the disengaged hand the medium now proceeds to write on the upper surface of the slate. When he has finished, the communication is read, and it is found to be a correct answer to the question on the opposite side of the slate.

To perform this seeming impossibility the medium has to employ a table containing a trap smaller than the frame of the slate. When the slate is placed on the table, the medium shifts it over this trap.

The trap is then opened, and by means of mirrors, 3, 4, 5, placed at angles of 45 degrees in the body of the table, the writing is reflected to the very place where the medium is sitting, and the image is reversed to normal by the third mirror, and it is easy then to give an answer to it. (Fig. 18.)



Fig. 18.—Reading the Questions by Means of Mirrors.

The following is how writing can be made to appear on a slate on which a person has placed his initials in one corner of it, which is then placed with that side downward on the table, and shortly afterward, on turning it over, it is found completely covered with writing, and the signature of the visitor proves there has been no exchange of the slate. The secret of obtaining this effect is both a unique and quite original method.

The writing is already on the slate and is hidden from view by the false flap, which has a corner missing from it. This missing corner is where the clever idea comes in. After the medium cleans both sides of the slate, he says: "I will just draw a chalk mark down in this corner of the slate wherein the gentleman is to place his signature." He really draws the chalk mark on the slate proper, but close to the edge of the missing corner of the flap, thus disguising the joint, and after the flap is dropped out of the slate of course this mark and signature still remains. (Fig. 19.)

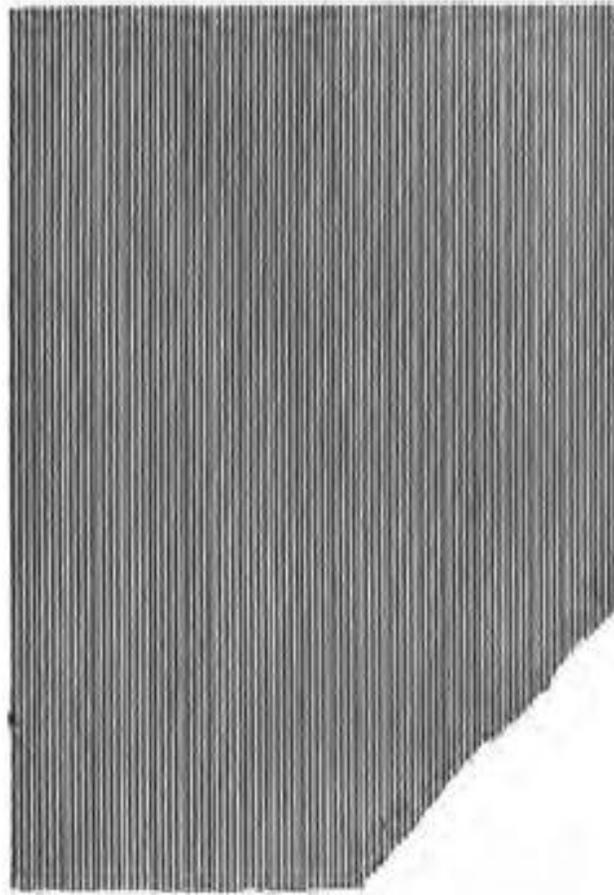


Fig. 19.—The Interrupted Flap.

Here is still another. The medium cleans a slate on both sides and hands it to a skeptic to place his mark on it. It is then placed on the table, face downward, and in a short time, on being turned over, it is found with a spirit message on it. This is performed as follows: Let the message be written on the slate and then sponged out with alcohol, and when the slate dries, the writing will be as plain as ever.

Here is another slate writing secret. Dissolve in hydrochloric acid some small pieces of pure zinc, about one-half ounce to an ounce of acid. With this solution write upon the slate with a quill or a small camel's hair brush the desired communication. When dry it closely resembles writing done with a slate pencil. When the time arrives for the test, wash the slate, and it appears to be perfectly clean; allow anyone to examine it and hold it until it becomes dry, but with the prepared side down. On the slate being turned over it is found to be covered with writing while in the spectator's hand.

Here is still another idea. The medium has a number of slates in his arms, say four. He hands the investigator the top one to clean. When he has done so, the medium receives it back and places it at the bottom of the pile of slates

and hands him another again from the top to be cleaned, and repeats this operation until all four slates have been cleaned. He now takes two of the slates, places them together, and, on removing them again, writing is found on one of them. Here is the method of procedure: Prepare your communication on one of the slates, and let it be the bottom of the pile, with the writing side down. Have your visitor seated, stand by his side just a trifle behind him, hand him the top slate to clean; after he has done so, hand him the second one and receive the first one back, placing it at the bottom of all the slates, and repeat until the third slate. While this one is being cleaned, slip the fourth, now the top slate, to the bottom again. When the third slate is received, place it on the bottom and hand the fourth, really the first one over again; it is, of course, the top one and dry by this time, and the investigator is none the wiser. Of course, the two slates placed together afterward are the one prepared with writing and one of the blank ones. Instead of slipping the top slate to the bottom, sometimes another dodge is used. The medium simply turns the three slates over by a twist of the hand. This brings the prepared slate at the bottom and the last slate cleaned at the top, and he says he will clean this one, thus saving time; really, however, to disguise the fact that it is still wet from the last cleaning. He says, however, to the visitor, "You can clean it also, if you desire."

From
Annemann 's Buried Treasure
by Theo. Annemann

A New Slate Writing Wrinkle

Here is the bare outline of the idea which I have used quite often to good results. Two slates are handed for examination and cleaning. Without substitution the slates are placed together and stood on an easel or upright. When opened, message is written across one in bold hand and performer rubs off with cloth to prove it is chalk.

The method is just opposite the regulation way. Instead of a flap being removed, one is added. It is on your table with message side down and receiving slates back, performer rubs off with dry cloth, and lays first slate over flap.

Rubs off other and picking one from table with flap underneath places them together, letting flap fall to lower slate and message side in. Now take them apart again as an afterthought and again show all sides empty. Place together and in laying on stand turn them over so flap drops back to original slate writing out. When opening hold flap tight to slate with finger and show and then rub out with cloth and drop flap side down on table, other state on top. If you want to hand for examination then, you can do so, but not necessary.

Amemann's



**PRACTICAL
MENTAL
EFFECTS**



*Miracle
slate routines*

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Miracle Slate Routines

THE PERFECT CLUB SLATE ROUTINE - ANNEMANN

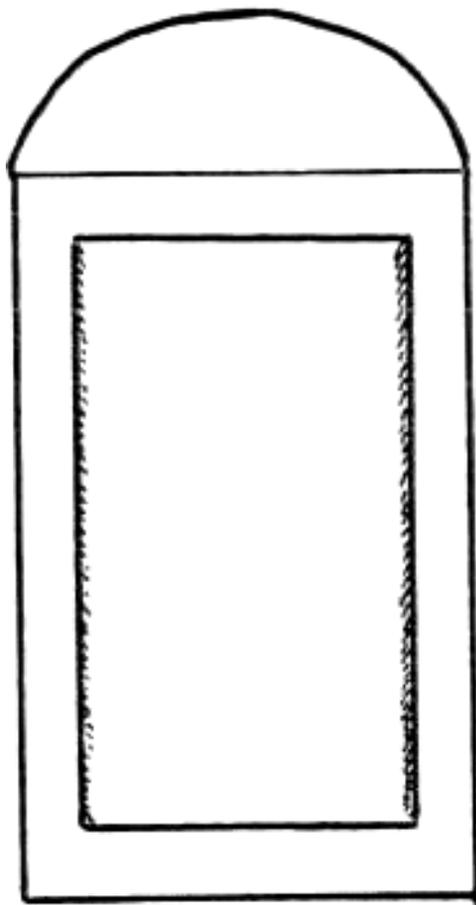
This is an original Annemann effect to which he added a subtlety with colored chalk by Norman Ashworth, a little known medium dodge by Al Baker, and the familiar window envelope to create as perfect a routine as you will find anywhere.

Effect: A prominent spectator is asked to think of some friend of his who has passed on, and to write that person's name on a card which is sealed in an envelope. When this has been done, the performer shows two slates on the four sides of which he writes a jumbled series of letters, which he explains he is passing on into the spirit world so that they may be used for a return message. The slates are now cleaned and another spectator is allowed a free choice of any one of a number of different pieces of colored chalk. He selects one and initials the two slates, which he holds stacked. The performer then picks up the sealed envelope saying, "Now, for the first time we shall learn the identity of the person of whom our friend has been thinking." The envelope is torn open and the name is read aloud. When the slates are opened, one bears the name of the first spectator's departed friend . . . and the name is written in the same color chalk as selected by the second person!

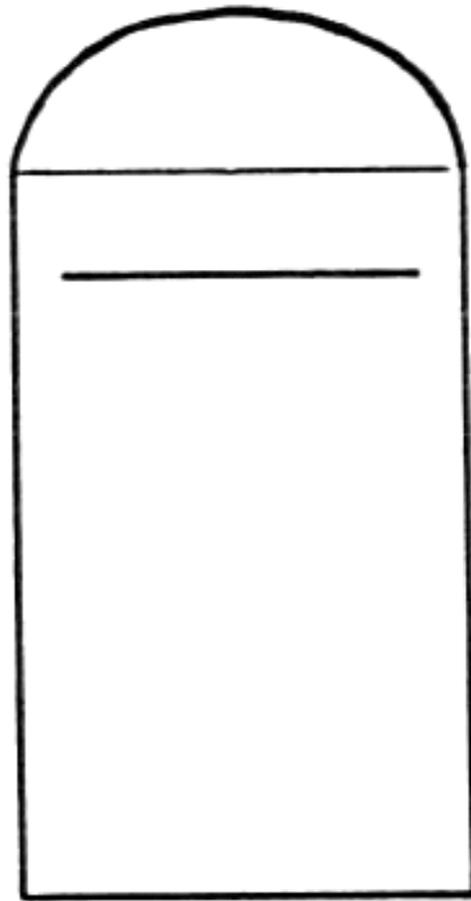
Requisites: Two slates and one silicate flap. On one side of the flap write three rows of mixed letters in white chalk, making the letters large enough to cover the entire surface of the flap. Also needed is a small drug envelope and a blank card to fit it. The envelope is faked by cutting a window in its face side.

Preparation: The flap, writing side downward, is laid on the table overlapping a side edge by about an inch. The two slates lie on top of flap. Also on the table are several pieces of colored chalk, all different, and to one side is a piece of white chalk.

Routine: A prominent spectator is asked to think of some departed friend and, just for the purposes of the test, to write this person's name on a card which you hand him. Have him insert the card, face down, in the (faked) envelope which you hold flap side up on your left palm. Your fingers cover the cut out front, which is against your palm, while your right fingers turn down the flap and hold the envelope open to make it easy for the spectator to insert the card. You assist him by giving the card the final shove, and then you seal the envelope. Finally you write the spectator's initials across the flap, and then stand the envelope against something in full view with the initialed side facing



WINDOW ENVELOPE



SLIT ENVELOPE

BOTH CUT ON THE FACE OR FLAP SIDE OF ENVELOPES

the audience. In doing this, you have ample opportunity to read the name showing through the window, which will be facing you, as you stand the envelope on the table.

You now pick up the two slates (without the flap), show them to be clean and lay them on the table again. Then show the colored chalks and allow some spectator to make a free choice of one color. These colored pieces of chalk should be about two and one-half inches long. When one is selected you pick it up and pass it to the spectator, but just as you pick it up you break off a piece and retain this piece in your hand. It is all done with one hand. Keep this colored piece palmed, as you pick up the white chalk from the table with your fingertips.

Now pick up one slate and proceed to cover both sides of it with mixed letters. To make the slate maneuvers clear, let's call them No. 1 and No. 2, and I suggest that you follow the routine with slates and chalks in hand. Cover the side of slate No. 1 with three rows of mixed letters in white chalk. Turn the slate over, so the lettering faces the audience, and apparently continue, but on this side the dead name is put down in colored chalk. The white piece being held at your finger tips is dropped to your palm, and the

colored piece merely worked up to the finger tips. As this switch is made behind the slate, you should experience no difficulty. After writing, switch the two chinks again. Without showing this side, lay this slate on the table—over the flap—with the name side down. At the same time pick up slate No. 2, and drop the palmed piece of colored chalk out of view among the other pieces of chalk on the table. Now fill both sides of slate No. 2 with mixed white chalk letters. You are holding this slate in your left hand, so you reach to the table with your right hand and pick up slate No. 1 together with the flap. With a slate in each hand, and the flap in place on slate No. 1, you are able to show both sides of each slate freely.

Put slate No. 2 under your right arm and, with a pocket handkerchief, clean slate No. 1 on both sides. Lay it on the table with the flap side down. Now clean slate No. 2. Pick up slate No. 1 again, leaving the flap on the table, and lay it on top of slate No. 2 which you are still holding. Have the spectator, with the colored chalk, initial the two outside surfaces, and then let him hold them. On the inside of the top slate is the dead name in the chosen color.

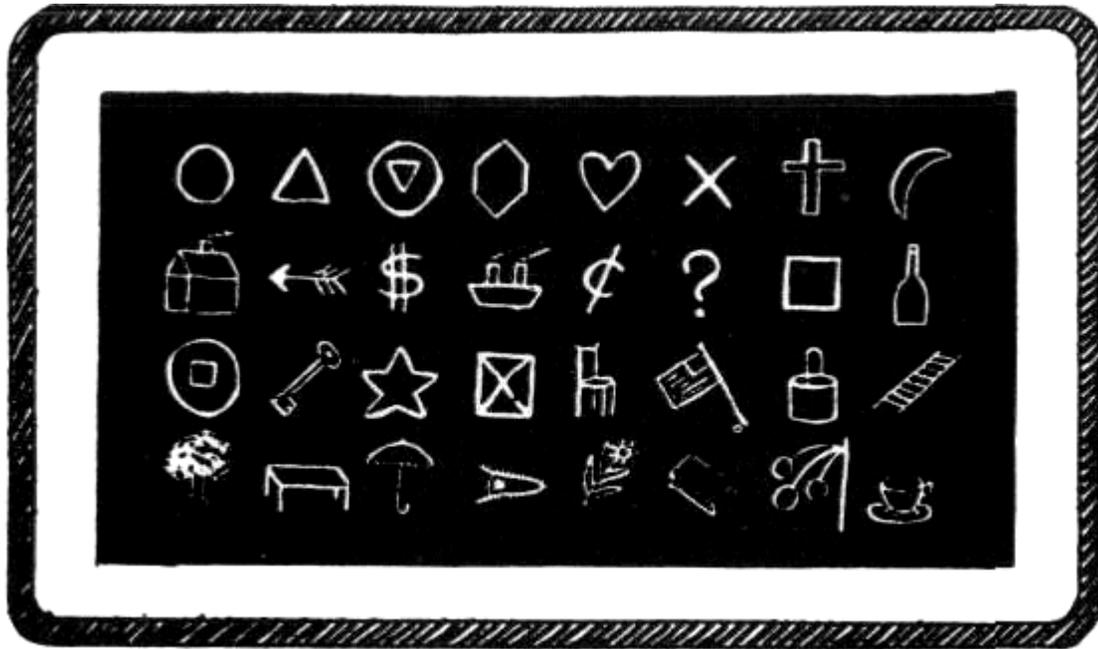
The envelope is now opened and the dead name is read aloud. The faked envelope, which has been displayed and held with its flap side to the audience throughout, is crumpled up and put in your pocket. Everyone now turns to the person with the slates and watches as he opens them and finds the chosen name in color!

As a variation you can use a slit envelope, instead of the window. This should be an end opener No. 2 Drug envelope. On the face side make a slit across the envelope $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the top when the flap is closed. In using this, lay it diagonally across your left hand with the flap side up and open, and pointing outwards. You aid in shoving the card in, and manage to lead the card through the slit so that it lies between the face of the envelope and your palm. The writing faces your palm, so in setting the envelope aside clip the card against the face of the envelope with your right thumb as you pick up the envelope off your left palm; hold the card side of the envelope facing you and glimpse the name. Now set the envelope on its edge against a book or some other object on your table. When you are ready to open the envelope later, pick it up with your right hand, with thumb at the back holding the card, and push the envelope into your left hand between the left thumb and first finger with the flap of the envelope to the right. The back of the left hand is held towards the audience, and the left thumb draws the card down into the palm and out of the slit. The card will only have to be moved about a half inch to clear the slit. The right hand now grasps the top of the envelope (flap end) and tears the envelope straight across right along the slit. The card is now apparently withdrawn from inside the envelope, really from back of it, and everything may be examined as there is no telltale evidence left.

EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION - ANNEMANN

One of the greatest effects in thought transmission is the coding of pictures freely drawn by the audience. It goes without saying that it is at the same time the most intricate of methods. Julius Zancig was most adept at this feat and developed it over a period of years through undisputed ability, plus a thorough grounding in transmission secrets.

What I am presenting here is quite marvelous to an audience and, at the same time, satisfying to the most exact performer in regards to cleanliness of working . One needs only a set of 32 five-Inch square cards and a large slate with chalk. These cards are best made of white drawing board. This can be obtained from stationery stores in sheets about 22 by 28 inches in size. On one side of each card is drawn a simple sketch with black drawing ink. The sketches are made very heavy and as large as possible. On the illustrated slate I have drawn the ideas I am using myself, although any others can be put to use.



Effect: The set of illustrated cards is freely shown to consist of 32 different and simple ideas. The performer says that he will try a test of thought transference with members of the audience. Pictures will be used rather than letters or figures because they are better visualized in the mind.

The cards, as the performer speaks, are mixed in a fair manner (but not shuffled like playing cards) and then placed in a stack with drawing sides down on the slate. Approaching a subject to be, the performer asks him or her to pick off a number of the cards in a bunch, and hold this stack with face of same close to the body for the time being. Without touching the cards left on the slate, the performer passes to another spectator and has him repeat the procedure. The few cards left are put aside and the performer stands a few

yards in front of one spectator with nothing but the slate and chalk in hand. For the first time the assistant is asked to look steadily at his drawing (*i.e.*: The bottom card of his stack) and concentrate upon it. It may be mentioned that at no time can the performer see either the face or back of the drawing being looked at, and that the selection has been left entirely to chance. However, the rest of the audience will know that and it is best not to emphasize the points.

Drawing something on his slate, the performer asks the spectator to show everyone the drawing on the card he selected. Turning his slate, the performer shows his sketch to be the same! Passing to the second spectator the test is repeated, with the performer duplicating on the other side of his slate the picture selected by this man! And everything may be left with the audience, if you so desire.

Preparation: The pictures are stacked but not in any memorized order. Draw these pictures, in the same order, with a pencil across the center of the slate. Your sketches will, of course, be very small.

Routine: Hold the pack of cards face down in your left hand. Take a bunch from the top with the right hand and apparently mix the two bunches together. Really though, a few from the top of the right hand are left on the bottom of the left pile, and then a few from the bottom of the right pile are left on top of the left stack. Repeat this maneuver until all of the cards in the right hand are exhausted, and then repeat the mixing, if desired. Do not attempt to shuffle the cards, but just mix them loosely and apparently at random, and you will have the best false mixing possible. When you have gone through a mixing or two, the cards are in the same order and have only been cut, which does not matter.

Approaching your assistants, they each cut off a bunch of cards and hold them against their bodies. Now lay aside the few remaining cards on your table and, as you drop them face up, your fingers spread them a little so that you get a glimpse of the top card. This is your key to the second person's card, which will be the card just to the left of the key card on your slate list.

As you pick up your slate, you spot the second person's drawing as just explained, and you ask him to look at his card and concentrate on the drawing it contains. Now turn your slate over and reproduce his drawing on the clean side of your slate. Make the sketch large enough for everyone to see it, but do not show it as yet. Ask him to show his card to the audience, and as he does so you turn your slate over and show that you have successfully drawn the same picture.

Take the bunch of cards from this second spectator and lay them aside exactly as you did with the first bunch, spotting the top card of the packet. From this second key card you learn the first person's drawing as already

explained. Ask him to concentrate on his drawing while you reproduce it on the opposite (list) side of the slate. Arrange your sketch with heavy lines so that it blocks out the list. Then have this first man show his drawing and you show your duplicate sketch for a smashing climax!

I doubt if a cleaner method of duplicating pictures can be devised for one person. From the viewpoint of the audience, it is very convincing and fair in every way.

NOTARIA - ANNEMANN-BAKER-DALEY

In effect, the performer asks two spectators to come forward and stand on each side of him. He hands a pack of cards to the first spectator and asks him to cut somewhere and remember the card at the cut. The second person is asked to decide upon any simple picture or diagram he may like. Both are given slips on which they jot down their mental ideas. Close at hand is an ash tray. The slips are torn and burned while the performer picks up a slate. Standing between the two people, but a little to the rear, the performer writes and draws on the slate. Now the first person names his card, and the second person shows his thought of picture. The slate is turned, and upon it the performer has duplicated the picture or diagram, and in the center of the sketch has written the name of the card. This makes a telepathic effect suitable for large or small audiences.

There are certain variations that can be used by those who adopt this trick, but as it stands now, it has a double climax which does away with the usual one at a time revelations.

Requirements: As I have been doing it, a one kind forcing deck is used for cleanness. Some may think this a funny idea of "cleanness" but I mean from the audience standpoint. The minute you start messing around, the spectators get lost in following you, so the presentation, as far as they are concerned, must be direct and open.

Have the deck in your right coat pocket with the usual different card at the bottom. You will also need a few pieces of opaque white paper, about two by three inches in sizes, which you have in readiness in your vest pocket, a couple of pencils, an ashtray, matches and a slate. A piece of chalk in your left coat pocket completes the set-up.

Routine: Have the spectators standing on each side of you about three yards apart. Take out the deck and overhand shuffle it, the fingers of the hand holding the deck retaining the bottom odd card in place. Explain to the first spectator that you want him to look at a card by chance while he has the deck in his possession. He is to hold it flat on his left hand, and with his right merely cut off a bunch of cards, look at the card thus cut, and replace those

removed. As you say this, illustrate by cutting off a bunch and looking at the face card, but don't let it be seen. Now deliberately put the deck on his left hand and step back. The moment he replaces the cut, step up and take the deck. As you take the deck from him, turn and ask the second person to think of a geometrical design or any simple picture that he likes, and which means something to him. Do not hesitate or stall between taking the deck and giving these instructions. The card selection has been so direct that no one gives it a thought, especially with the immediate request for a picture and because it is a bizarre idea in comparison to a card.

As the spectator says he has a picture in mind, drop the deck in your left coat pocket and at the same time take the two papers from your vest pocket and give one to him. Suggest that he draw the sketch so he'll have a definite and clear cut picture in his mind. Then give the other paper to the first spectator with the remark that he also write down his thought-of card in order to firmly fix it on his mind. (I've tried various routines for this part, and the described actions worked out best.) Now ask them to fold the papers tightly, once each way.

Explain that in ancient times, the soothsayers gazed into the smoke of burning incense, or at some personally owned article to divine secrets pertaining to that person. You will attempt the same thing, but in a smaller way. Look at the first person and remark that you want him to tear and burn his paper. Continue, "Look, tear it and then burn it like this." As you say this, you reach out and take the paper the second man is holding. Still addressing the first person, tear up and steal the center piece as already described in "The Mind-reading Publicity Effect," page 30. The right fingers finally take all the torn pieces, except the center piece which you have clipped between your left thumb and first finger, as you step over to an ash tray where you drop them. As you finish this action, repeat: "Just be sure the pieces are small and will bum easily."

Now watch the first person, the one who selected the card, tear his slip and put it with the pieces you dropped in the tray. Then tell the second person to light them. Up until now you have ignored him since taking his paper. Afterwards both will swear, as do the audience, that they have torn and burned their own papers. The described maneuvering is perfect misdirection for what takes place.

As the second person lights the paper, you pick up the slate and step back. Your left hand reaches into your pocket for the chalk as you direct the burning of the papers, and you flip open the folded center piece you have finger-palmed in your hand. The piece is small enough to be palmed but you only open it half way. Bring it out and put it under the tip of your right thumb which is holding the slate, opening out the paper at the same time.

Now ask both parties to think intently of the card and the picture. Start to make a few rough lines on the slate with the chalk held in your left hand. Just a glance at the paper under the right thumb and you have the picture. Look at the second person and suggest that he concentrate a little harder on the picture, visualizing it as a whole and not as individual lines. Catch hold of the slate with your left hand as your right hand, with the slip, reaches into your pocket for a handkerchief with which to wipe off the slate. Naturally the paper slip is left behind, and you are now free to finish the picture, and write the name of the card in the center of it.

A TORN LETTER - ANNEMANN

Effect: The performer picks up a packet of four-inch square papers. "I have here," he says, "the 26 letters of the alphabet cut from a type of paper not available to the public. You, sir," addressing some member of the audience, "will please think of someone who was a close relative or friend — someone not now living—what is the initial of his first name?"

Let us suppose the letter mentioned to be M. The performer hands the packet to the person with the request that he look through—they all are in order—and remove that particular one.

During this interval the mysticist shows two slates. "These *are* available to the public," he says, "and we shall use them in a way to prove beyond reasonable doubt that something strange is at work here tonight."

He openly shows the slates to be clean of anything foreign and at the same time marks the sides 1, 2, 3 and 4. Put together, the slates are handed to the spectator as the performer takes back the letter, in this case M.

"When people or things on this earth are destroyed," he continues, "the meaning, the spirit, or the soul flies into another level of being." The performer, during this, is tearing the lettered paper into strips and the strips into parts. He makes them into a flat bundle and approaches the man with the slates.

Opening the slates just a little he definitely drops the paper within. And he takes back the remainder of the alphabet papers when he steps away.

"Now let's see if conditions are right for a successful contact with your thought in what spiritualists see fit to call "the happy summerland."

The performer paces back and forth several times, covering a short distance. No talk is necessary. The audience always waits. Then the spectator is asked to get up and come forward. He opens the slates.

"Take the paper," says the performer, who then takes the slates. He shows the inside surfaces. Upon one slate appears a message somewhat like this, "Dear Harry: Conditions are good here. It's not the same as before but I'm

as happy as I deserve to be. I've put my initial back together again in case Annemann (or your name) wants to make contact for someone else."

The performer looks at his subject, "You are Harry?" And when the person admits it, he further asks, "Open up the pieces of paper."

The torn pieces are in restored fashion and the letter M goes back to the packet. And there isn't anything to be found wrong with the visible and available objects used before the audience.

Preparation: You need two sets of alphabet papers. The sheets are cut four inches square and large black letters inked on. Only two papers need be replaced at each performance. The paper should be of good linen quality on the heavy side.

One set of papers is folded up in a hap-hazard way to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size. These 26 billets are deposited in a regulation "Cards from the Pockets" index as sold by all dealers. Only one of the two indexes supplied is used. It will hold 26 of these papers in place of the half deck it was made to contain. You know them as 1 to 26 and the index is placed in your left trousers' pocket.

The slates? On one side of one slate the message is written. Beforehand, pick some one person in your audience, one not seated in a spot difficult to reach, and learn his or her first name. That's what you fill in after "Dear ———."

Routine: The performer picks up the slates and numbers them. The numbering of the slates is done as follows: In one corner of the message side put the figure 1. This side is at the bottom outward of the stack of two, figure towards the audience as you hold them at first, keeping the message side down. Openly mark the top side with a figure 1 to match. Your right hand takes hold of the slate at the right outer corner, turns it outward like an end-hinged notebook and brings it back underneath the other. The new surface next is numbered 2 on its outer left corner. The same hinge move and come-back underneath is made, but during the action the slates are brought up a bit to face the performer. He writes a 3 on the new surface *and then* lowers the slates to show the numeral. He then lifts them again towards himself and apparently makes the same move for the third time but actually, the hinged out slate, instead of going underneath the other, is brought down on top of the slate in left hand.

Without a pause, he is seen to write the number 4. However, facing him now is the number 1 side and his action is simply that of changing the 1 to a 4. Then the slates are lowered and the audience sees it in all fairness. The slates are given to the spectator with his right hand, and, while he explains that as little light as possible should get between them, the performer's left

hand has dropped to his pocket and secured the letter needed. He takes back the selected letter with his right hand, it is shown all and torn. After the pieces are folded to about the correct size a finger switch is made and the performer approaches the spectator quickly, his left hand diving deliberately to his left trousers' pocket again to get rid of the pieces, and comes out with a large rubber band.

"Open the slates just a little," the performer requests, "the pieces of the initial should help to get a direct line open to the hereafter." The restored paper is pushed inside and the rubber band snapped around all. "That should help to keep light out."

The effect is done except for presentation of the finish as described before.

I made this up and have used it recently. The torn and restored initial definitely has possibilities. With other restored paper effects there was little or nothing to differentiate between that destroyed and that restored, except in the simple cases of Chinese laundry slip markings and magazine pages.

In this case we have a restored letter freely picked by a member of the audience, plus a message via slates, and a clean finish that will stand investigation.

HEADLINE HUNTER - ANNEMANN

Effect: From out of the past I have taken a slate writing principle, long off the market, and utilized it in this problem. Bruce Hurling's method for getting rid of a "flap" while standing before an audience in view of all may be used for countless effects. It should not be forgotten.

To his watchers the performer shows a slate blank on both sides and identifies these sides by writing initials on each as called out to him. The slate is stood in full view of everyone for the time being. Next are shown three current newspapers having blatant headlines. A spectator aids in the choice of one, whereupon the performer quickly cuts the headline words apart and puts them onto a table or the floor in crumpled up balls.

Another spectator does his part in the choice of one word, and he reads it aloud for all to hear. He, himself, then approaches the slate and shows both sides. And on the slate, which may be passed around for avid inspection, is shakily chalked the very word picked!

Method and Presentation: In concocting this method I discarded the use of cards, dice, counters, etc., for the choosing of a word because, in the case at hand, they were objects "foreign" to the subject. It is necessary only to have the slate with special flap, two newspapers, chalk, and shears.

Let's cover the "selection" of the word before describing the genius-like qualities of the slate itself. Newspaper headlines are short and to the point

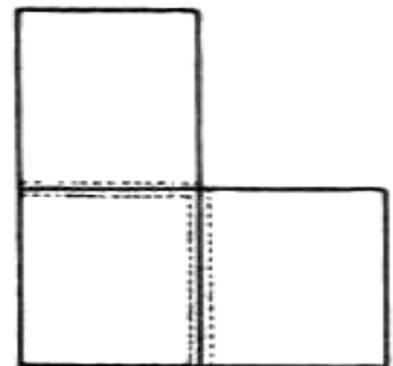
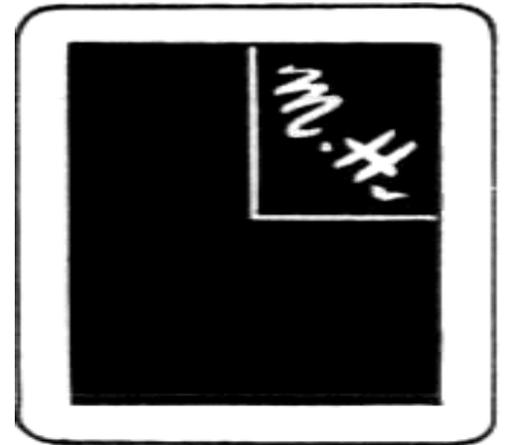
with nothing unnecessarily said. Except in terrific times, when one and two words carry great import, there are an average of from three to six words displayed. That the paper may be a few days old doesn't matter. The other paper, of a different name, must have a headline also, but it doesn't matter as to the exact number of words.

Let us say, for example, that we wish to have "selected" the second word of one paper which reads "House Votes Strike Ban." The two papers are thrown down before the first spectator, and to him you say, "Just pick up either one, please." If he picks up the one you want you take it from him, saying, "Thank you," and walk to another person for the next move. If he picks up the wrong one, you say, "It's yours. And when you read it, later tonight, and find out what is happening throughout the world, remember that something strange happened here." Naturally, the "wrong" newspaper always is of current date. And, as you say your piece, pick up the other paper and carry it to the second person.

"There is power in headlines," you continue. "Every word has a meaning of its own." With the shears you slash away at the four word banner, cutting the words apart and dropping them in crumpled balls onto the floor or table. Let them fall as they will, but be careful to note *which one* is the word you want to have "selected."

"Pick up two of them, one with each hand," you say. If the wanted one is among these you continue without pause, "Give me one." If you receive the desired word you open the paper, read it aloud and hand to someone else nearby. If the wrong one is given you say, "Over my left shoulder as appeasement to the spirits beyond (tossing it so), and now will you please open the paper you have and read aloud the word it contains?"

But, if the two papers picked up by the spectator *do not* include the wanted one, say, "Toss them over your shoulders at the same time, for that is a manner of appeasing the spirits beyond. Now give me one of the papers remaining." If given the correct one you open it and proceed. If given the wrong one, toss it over *your own* left shoulder, saying, "After all, I must do a bit of appeasing myself." Then have the spectator open and read the last paper.



FLAP

DOTTED LINES
INDICATE SCOTCH
TAPE HINGES

Aside from the general explanation I want to insist that you have here one of the very best methods of "forcing" without the use of extraneous apparatus which only too often tends to distract attention from the effect by being "out of place." The method and principle takes practice and assurance, but it will last you throughout a lifetime of magic.

That takes care of the word being the one which appears on the slate.

Important no end, in itself, the "message from beyond" is essential, too, and the way it happens-goes like this:—

Procure or make a silicate slate with frame, the inside (slate surface proper) dimensions of which are 5 x 7 inches or smaller—no larger. The flap to accompany this slate is made of thinner silicate, or, as in my case, of black art board, obtainable from art stores in 17 x 22 in. sheets, and very pliable. The inside of slate is quartered, and the finished flap takes up three of these, the diagrams making this clear, I hope.

As you can see depicted, the flap is foldable twice which brings it down to quarter size, and that size is palmable, it being no larger than a playing card. Scotch tissue tape, now very prevalent, was used for the hinges. That one which is on the audience side of the slate was sanded with fine sandpaper to take away the gloss, but it isn't necessary because the slate is more or less perfunctorily shown.

At the first showing, the performer draws a chalk line cutting off one-quarter of the slate's surface, and this is done on the flap side at start. The line is drawn along the edge of the flap, or edges of the flaps if you care to make them plural. The initials called are put upon the slate proper, there being a coinciding chalk line on the slate itself just under the flap (s) edge. The word to be forced has been written underneath the flap (s).

The first "quartered-off" section is on the unprepared side, and it is duly initialed. When the second set of initials is given, they are put on the flap (s) side and that person asked to step forward. He is used for the first choice of the papers, and this slight interval allows you to let the top half of flap drop down and engineer the quarter-flap to the right, whereupon the folded flap can be palmed to the pocket when chalk is put away.

That does it. The word is picked freely, and it appears upon a slate mysteriously. What more can be asked of a trick?

PSYCHIC SLATE TEST - ANNEMANN

This is the simplest of slate effects in method, but a moment's thought followed by an actual tryout will convince you of its effectiveness.

Effect: After you have done a card effect or two, state that you will prove beyond doubt that a card's identity can be transmitted by thought waves alone. Spread the deck face down on the table or floor. A spectator freely takes any card he wishes and allows no one to see it. He is told that if his selection be a picture or face card to return it and take another, as it is too difficult to transmit personalities, and so far you have only had definite success with the spot cards.

Hand the spectator a slate and a piece of chalk and ask him to step to one corner of the room. You pick up another slate and step to an opposite corner. Ask him to draw, as well as he can, a picture outline of the card he selected and that you will try to get a thought wave of it and draw it too. He does as he is requested and you draw a picture at the same time. When you both turn your slates around it is seen that you have successfully accomplished your purpose by duplicating the very picture drawn by the subject.

Requirements: Use a stacked deck, Si Stebbins, Nikola, or otherwise, plus two slates and chalk.

Routine: Follow the above presentation to the point where you hand the subject the slate. He has already made his selection of a card, so you pick up the deck and lay it aside. However, you started picking up the deck *from the spot where the selected card was removed*, and then pick up the remaining cards and place these on top of the first group. As you lay the deck aside, glimpse the bottom card (the one that was originally above the selected card) and you know immediately what card was chosen!

No one need tell me that this is simple. I know it, but I use it, too. The follow up with the drawings will throw the audience right off the scent, and they will remember this number long after they have forgotten more intricate tricks.

THE GYSEL SLATE - ANNEMANN

Undoubtedly, this is one of the neatest and most subtle of the flap slate methods for home séance work yet devised. I first saw it done by Bob Gysel several years ago, and its operation had me completely puzzled until the whole routine of action was revealed.

Two slates and a flap are used, the flap being prepared at one end with a sharp spring steel hook. A flat piece of spring, about a quarter of an inch wide and one inch long is bent into a V shape. One prong is now filed to a sharp point. The V shaped piece is now put over the center of one end of the flap and the untouched prong is securely fastened to one side by glue and a small piece of black tape. The pointed prong sticks out over the other side as illustrated. Use a small table, such as a card table, and have on it a loose cloth cover.

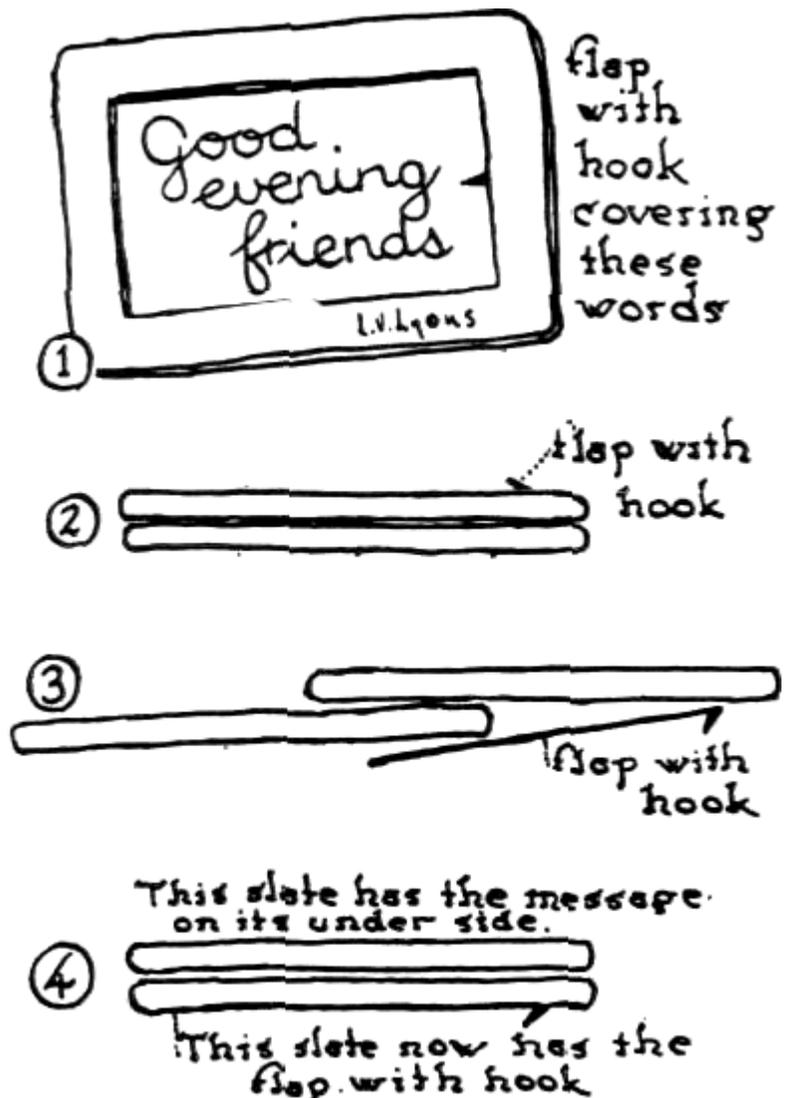
Write the message on one side of one slate and cover it with the flap, hook sticking outward as per illustration No. 1 Put the unprepared slate underneath and place the two slates to one side until ready to work. Pick up the two slates together as per illustration No. 2. Turn them over once so that both outside surfaces are shown to be clean. This leaves the flap on the underside and the hook is at the right. Separate them, holding the top slate at the left end with the left thumb on top and fingers underneath; and the bottom slate is held at the right end in the same manner with the right hand.

The flap is held in place on the under side of the right hand slate.

Both sides of both slates are shown by turning the hands. Now place the slates back together with the right hand slate going on top. The wooden edge is placed on the wooden edge of the left hand slate and, at this moment, the right fingers let up a bit with their pressure and the weight of the flap allows it to drop about an inch as per illustration No. 3. Then the right hand slate is slid along on top and the flap is thus transferred to the underside of the bottom slate. The situation is now as pictured in illustration No. 4.

The left hand now slides off the top slate, on the underside of which is the message, and drops it on the table. The right hand grasps the remaining slate by the side nearest the body with the thumb on top and fingers underneath, keeping the flap in place. At this point, you apparently think of the table covering, and your left hand pushes the slate on the table to one side a bit, and pulls off the cloth by grasping it at the center of the side nearest you. As this is pulled up, the action covers the right hand and slate for a second, and you'll find the hook in a position to be caught in the cloth.

The left hand continues taking the cloth away, and the sides of it will fall down to hang



around and effectively hide the flap. Turn a bit to your right and toss or drop the cloth out of the way.

Start to put the right hand slate on top of the other, but turn it around as you do so to show the other side. This is the move that will fool any wise person who may know about flaps. Drop it on top of the other slate and explain that with the slates on a solid surface, a spirit message should appear on the inner surface if at all. As you say this, lift off the top slate to show the inside and, in replacing it, slide it underneath the other slate. Pick up both slates together, tap the edges on the table, and then drop them down turned over. All is now ready for the finish.

Mr. Gysel used this continually as the opening to a series of mediumistic effects to obtain the message, "Good evening, friends." Or one can go further by having the message signed by the "control" supposed to be guiding the séance.

The whole operation takes but a minute, and is done easily and almost carelessly. The writer has seen Gysel do this without the cloth get-away for the flap, but it is not so easy unless one has established the appearance of being erratic in the way of moving around. Using small slates, the handling was exactly the same to the point where the top slate with the message underneath was tossed to the table. At this time, the other slate was held in the right hand which dropped to the side for a second where the flap was hooked onto the clothes a little behind the right hip. When the message was revealed, he turned a bit more towards the right, and the right hand merely grasped the flap by its sides, lifted it loose, and dropped it into the right side coat pocket when he reached in for a handkerchief to be used as a blindfold for his next test. The action, although bold, was done so easily that detection was almost impossible.

BEFORE YOUR EYES - NORMAN ASHWORTH

This effect is one of the most popular slate tricks of recent years because it combines originality, action and a real surprise finish that makes it ideal as a club program item.

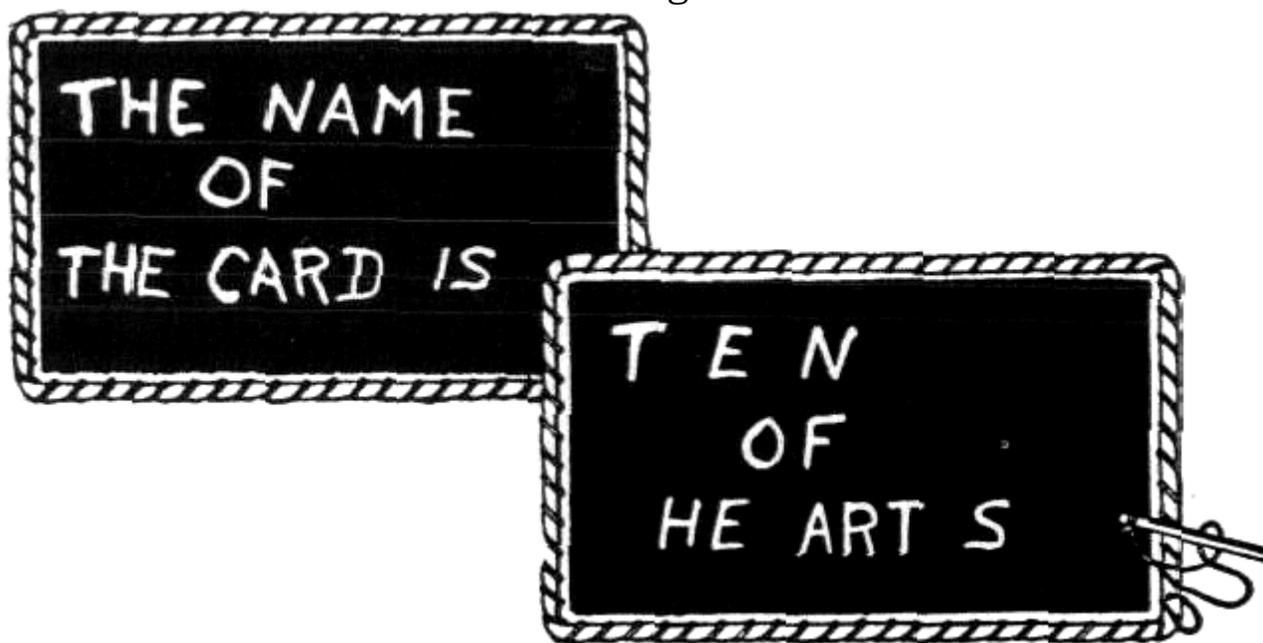
Effect: The performer picks up a single slate and with a piece of chalk writes in large letters, "THE NAME OF THE CARD IS . . ." This message fills the slate, which is freely shown to the audience before being laid aside. Now the performer has a card selected, as he explains that the spirits will complete the sentence he has written on the slate by filling in the name of the chosen card. He picks up the slate to prove his statement only to find that nothing has happened, and that the slate still bears the message exactly as he had written it.

The performer looks surprised, remarking that this is the first time the message hasn't been completed correctly by the spirits. Then, as an afterthought, he realizes that there isn't enough room on the slate for more writing, so he decides to erase the message and rewrite it in smaller letters. As he erases his message a strange thing happens, for some of the letters refuse to be wiped off—and those letters remaining in view spell out the name of the selected card; TEN OF HEARTS! The spectator holding the chosen card acknowledges this as being correct.

This startling finish, turning an obvious failure into a complete victory for the performer, has tremendous audience appeal making it an effect worthy of any program.

Preparation: All that you need for this surprising trick is one slate with flap and a deck of cards.

First, write with chalk on the slate the words, "THE NAME OF THE CARD IS," as in the illustration. Then erase the various letters so the slate looks like the second one in the illustration. Erase enough of the letter "D"



so it is changed to a "T". Now go over the letters, "TEN OF HEARTS" with white paint and set the slate aside to dry. When ready, chalk in the missing letters of the original sentence, being careful to convert the "T" back to a "D" again, so that the slate appears exactly like the first illustration.

Cover this message with the flap and lay the slate on the table together with a deck of cards and a piece of chalk. On top of the deck have the Ten of Hearts ready to force. Also have a cloth handy for erasing the writing.

Presentation: Pick up the slate and show both sides, being careful to hold the flap in place with your thumb or your fingers. Pick up the chalk and print the message on the flap exactly as in the first illustration. Then lay the slate on the table, writing side down, and pick up the deck of cards. Go into

your patter theme while you force the Ten of Hearts. Use the method you can do best. (If you can't force a card naturally, better buy a copy of Annemann's "202 Methods of Forcing.") The person selecting the card puts it in his pocket. You now reach for the slate and pick it up, but leave the flap on the table. The message you now show is the prepared one, but to the audience it is the one you have just written! Look surprised for a moment, then disappointed, then brighten up and point out that it was your fault for not leaving enough space on the slate for the spirits to answer. Pick up the cloth and start erasing the message. All the chalked letters disappear, and the painted letters remain forming the name of the chosen card.

Howard Brooks, the night club magician, does the trick without using a flap. He starts off with the prepared message already on the slate. Without showing this side of the slate to the audience, he pretends to write a message, then turns the slate around and shows what he has apparently written. He then hands the slate to someone to hold over his head until time for the finale.

WALTER GIBSON'S METHOD

This method has several nice points that may appeal to some readers in that you can eliminate the force and get away with the flap at the same time.

Follow this closely. The slate is prepared in the same manner as originally described. The Ten of Hearts from the deck is then placed face down upon the written message and the flap is then put on top of both. A second slate, unprepared, is on top of the prepared one, and a deck of cards and a piece of chalk is set on top of all.

The cards are handed to someone for shuffling. The top slate is removed and placed under the arm. Next the sentence is openly chalked upon the flap of the second slate. The spectator who has mixed the deck is asked to stand, fan the cards face down before himself, draw any one he wishes and put it, without looking at it or showing it to anyone, face down upon the written message. The other slate is then dropped on top to cut off all light and give the happy spirit a chance to see the card and write its name for all to see.

During this short interval the slates are turned over together, which lets the flap drop to the unprepared slate. Then the prepared slate, now on top, is lifted. The same sentence is seen, and face up on the other slate is seen the Ten of Hearts, apparently the card which was selected by the spectator. He is asked to take the card and show it around. The slate with flap (and the other card underneath it) is again put under the arm where it is held tightly in place by pressure of the elbow. The slate bearing the message is shown, talked about, and finally wiped off to reveal the correct name of the chosen card.

Thus the stunt is done without forcing, and away from tables in the middle of the floor with people on all sides. A word of precaution is necessary,

however. If you find that you cannot prevent the card from slipping out from under the flap when you have the slate under your arm, better lay the slate on the floor and play safe.

PHANTOM HAND - OSCAR WEIGLE, JR.

Effect: A number of white pasteboard cards are shown to be all different and to contain a number on one side, all numbers varying in the hundreds and thousands. The cards are shuffled, and after cutting, a spectator removes five, holding them number side down. On a slate the performer now chalks, "THE TOTAL OF THE NUMBERS SELECTED WILL BE," explaining that a helpful spirit will write in chalk the total of the addition to be arrived at presently. Another slate is given to a spectator, who copies the numbers selected on the slate and then adds them up. While this is being done, the first slate is given to another person to hold.

The copying and adding being finished, the spectator holds his slate for all to see and note the total. The second spectator shows his slate but no spirit writing is yet to be seen. The performer takes it back, saying something must have detained the spirit control, and starts to erase the words. They are seen to change to numbers and, upon comparison with the first slate, every one of the numbers coincide exactly! And not only is the correct total revealed, but all figures of the addition check, so that both slates look alike!

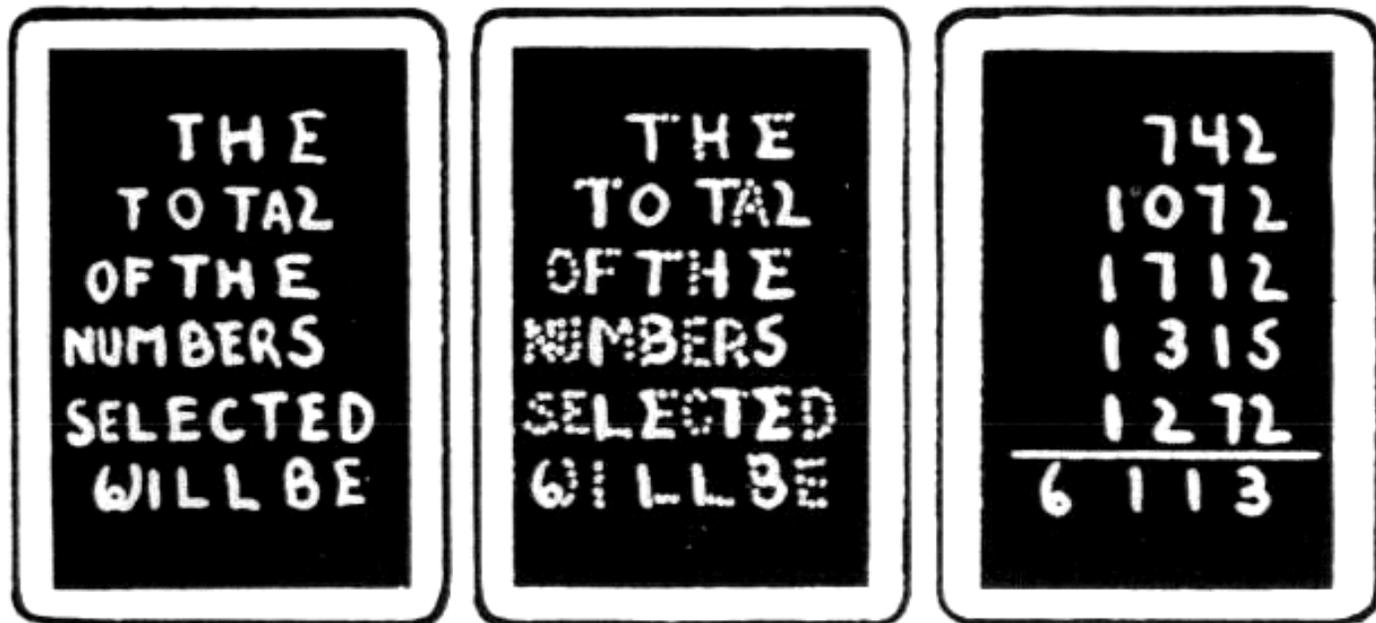
Preparation: The basic principle is the same as that used in "Before Your Eyes," page 168. This presentation is good either for a repeat show, or a place where playing cards are not suitable. The cards used are of white drawing board, playing card size. About 30 or 40 can be used. With bold strokes of black India ink letter the cards, numbering them from 100 to 1999. Make more of the "thousand" cards than the "hundreds," it being in keeping with the effect.

The five cards responsible for the effect are forced. In order from the top down they read: 742, 1072, 1712, 1315 and 1272. When added together they total 6113. The five cards are on top of the deck to start, and are kept there during the shuffle.

The pack is shown with the numbers towards the audience. In squaring the cards, the top 6 or 7 are held by the left hand while the right turns the rest "face down" on them. Advance to a spectator with the pack in your left hand, and have him lift off some of the cards. As you ask if he cut at any point he wished, the misdirection allows you to turn over the packet in your hand and then the top five are taken. That's the force.

For the slate preparation print the words as shown in the first illustration. covering the entire surface of the slate with the message. Make the downstrokes of all "E's" slightly curved—also the "L" of the word "total." The

"S" in the word "numbers" is made to resemble a "5" and is unnoticed with the rest of the letters. The "W" in the last line is curved and looped so that the first part of it looks like a "6".



Letters and parts of letters are now erased to leave the figures as shown in the second illustration. These numbers are gone over with white paint. Before presenting, fill in the letters and parts of letters of the original message and cover all with a flap.

This slate, together with an unprepared one, the deck of cards, chalk and a soft erasing cloth are on your table to start.

Effect: After the card selection, pick up the flap slate and write the message on the flap, forming and spacing the letters as you know them to be underneath. You may have them on the flap in pencil. Put the slate on the table, flap side down, and hand the ordinary slate to a spectator. He turns the cards over one at a time and writes the numbers down and adds them. Thus they are put down in the correct order. Before he starts to add, mention that someone else should hold the message slate. Pick up the slate from the table, leaving the flap behind, and as the writing looks the same, all is well and you can be as open and free with this prepared slate as you like. Give it to the second spectator to hold, writing side down in his hands.

The first man adds the figures on the unprepared slate and gets a total of 6113. Ask the second spectator if the total has appeared as yet on his slate. It hasn't! Take the prepared slate from him and start to erase it, holding it so everyone can see what you are doing. The figures appear in full view, and it is but the work of a moment to draw a line just above the total. Everything now checks!

THE ULTRA SLATE MESSAGE - DR. JACOB DALEY

Note by Ted Annemann: Good methods for the appearance of messages on slates are many, but the routine explained here was shown to me by one of America's cleverest amateurs and I have been using it ever since.

Presentation: The psychic shows four pieces of silicate of the flap type. With a handkerchief or dry cloth he casually wipes the upper surface of the top piece, turns it over, cleans the under side and puts the cleaned slate on the table. This is done with all four pieces of silicate in the most open and easy manner and then all four are spread in a row. The spectator is asked to indicate any two of them, and two are laid aside. The chosen two are picked up, put together and the spectator holds them. Upon sliding them apart, nothing is found. A few moments later they are separated again and still nothing is found. Finally, on the third attempt, a real chalk message is found completely covering the entire side of one slate, and all four pieces may be left with the sitters.

Routine: One simple move makes this whole routine possible as well as perfect. When the four pieces of silicate are held in the left hand, the message is on the upper side of the third flap from the top. Dot the top flap so you can always tell which is the top of the stack. Dr. Daley uses pieces of silicate five inches by seven inches as the most practical size. The left little finger holds a break between the third and bottom piece at the start. Hold them flatwise in your left hand. The top piece is cleaned and then turned over with the right finger and thumb at the lower right inner corner. When this side has been cleaned it is slid off and dropped on the table. The top surface of the next slate is now wiped off and the same maneuver is made but this time two pieces are turned over together as one! In short, you merely make a two-card turnover with silicate flaps! The newly presented surface is cleaned and this second piece, bearing a message on its under side, is slid off onto the table. The remaining two pieces are cleaned in the same manner as the others, and are laid on the table so that you have four pieces in a row, of which all have been cleaned and shown on each side in an unquestionably fair manner. The message slate is No. 2 in the row and performer keeps his eye on it.

The spectator now indicates any two. No matter which ones he takes, he must or must not include the message slate in his selection. The performer either keeps the two indicated or uses the remaining two pieces depending upon which set contains the message slate. This message slate is dropped on top of the other and the two slates are held by the spectator. To look at them the first time, the top one is slid off with right hand but nothing has been written on the upper side of lower slate, so the piece slid off is replaced, but goes below the left hand piece this time. Again they are held (message is now on bottom of the lower slate) and this time the top piece is opened out like a

book but still nothing has appeared. This top piece again is put underneath the other and, in handing them again to the spectator, the two are turned over. This time when slid apart, the message looks directly up at them.

Once used, I think this method will be found highly effective and practical. I certainly like it and have found it to be one of the cleanest methods of which I know.

THE ANSWER - DR. JACOB DALEY

Every once in a while a principle makes its appearance which may be used in many different ways. The following effect combines Dr. Daley's silicate flap routine with the torn billet and stolen center idea to create one of the most impressive mental tests in years. It makes the magician's dream a reality in that it provides an impromptu method of producing a spirit answer that is a direct reply to any question written by a spectator!

Effect: The performer has someone write a question on a small two inch by three inch piece of paper which is then torn up and burned in a convenient ashtray. While the paper pieces are burning, the performer introduces four silicate flaps, about four inches by five inches, which he shows to be blank. To convince everyone that they do not already bear any messages, he cleans each one individually with his handkerchief and lays them, one at a time, on the table. Two of them are selected. Using these as a writing tablet, the performer proceeds to "get an impression" of the question and writes it on the flap. His first and second attempts are failures, but he cleans the two flaps once more with his handkerchief, places them together, and asks the spectator to put them in his pocket temporarily. When they are removed a few minutes later, they are found to contain a direct answer to the question asked.

Preparation: The few props necessary for this effect may be carried with you at all times. Have the four silicate flaps in your right coat pocket, together with a few slips of papers. The chalk and the box of matches are in your left coat pocket. Also have a pencil or pen handy.

Routine: As already mentioned, this is a combination of two routines. The torn and stolen center stunt will be found on page 30 in Annemann's "Mindreading Publicity Effect."

Follow the procedure outlined there, but use one of your plain white paper slips, with a penciled oval drawn in its center, instead of the newspaper square described in the Annemann trick. After tearing the slip into small pieces and stealing the center section bearing the question, deposit it in your left coat pocket as you reach for the box of matches. At the same time, drop the torn pieces into a nearby ashtray with your right hand. Hand the box of

matches to the spectator and ask him to burn the paper pieces which you have crumpled up in the ashtray.

Now reach into your right coat pocket and remove the four silicate flaps. The third flap from the top already bears this message: "It will occur sometime next year," and the flaps should be held so that this message faces up. Work Dr. Daley's "Ultra Slate Message" routine with the flaps up to the point where the two flaps are selected from among four. One of the two selected ones must bear the written message. Put these two flaps together so that the message is on the inside, and then turn them over to bring the message face up between the flaps.

Hold the two flaps in your right hand, while you talk to the spectator asking him to think of his question. Reach into your left coat pocket with your left hand for the chalk, and secure the stolen paper at the same time. Finger-palm the stolen center piece as you bring out the chalk. Bring your left hand up behind the flaps being held in your right hand, and transfer the flaps from your right hand to your left, as your right hand takes the chalk. Clip the stolen center against the rear of the flaps with your left thumb. The stolen center is folded but twice and is easily opened behind the flap with the aid of the right fingers. The flaps, of course, are held so that the paper is not visible to your audience. Now you apparently get an impression and begin to write on the surface of the flap facing you. Actually you have read the question written on the torn out center of the paper, and you deliberately write a direct answer to it on the flap. When finished, place both flaps under your left arm, drop the piece of chalk into your right coat pocket together with the torn center piece, as you repeat aloud the text of your dummy answer. This dummy answer is on the flap nearest your left arm, so as you finish quoting it, grasp this flap with your right hand and show the dummy message to the spectator. (The flap bearing the correct answer is still under your arm.) Ask the spectator if the answer means anything to him.

The spectator says that the message does not mean a thing. As you discuss it with him, you transfer the flap to your left hand, reach up with your right hand and obtain the flap still under your left arm, and add it to the bottom of the flap in your left hand. Do not let the spectator catch a glimpse of the writing of this second flap. Now carelessly tilt the flaps again so that the dummy message is again visible, reach for your pocket handkerchief and clean off the dummy message. Replace your handkerchief and obtain the chalk again from your right coat pocket.

Make a second attempt to "get an impression," but this time tilt the flaps so that the spectator sees you scribbling a few disjointed words. These mean nothing either, so you remark that perhaps it would be better to let the message come through by itself.

Clean off the last words you wrote and hand the two flaps, still together, to the spectator and ask him to put them in his pocket. Ask him to repeat aloud the question he wrote for everyone to hear. Then suggest that he take the flaps out and look at them. He finds a direct answer written on one of the flaps, of course, bear minute examination.

Seriously worked, this makes a fine impression because of the direct answer angle, a feature which heretofore has depended upon assistants or plants. The under arm subtlety is one of Dr. Daley's recent improvements in the handling of the flaps, and the final touch in the perfection of this masterpiece. We are indebted to the Doctor for his permission to include this clever method of switching the flaps in this book.

NEVER FAIL - DR. JACOB DALEY

This effect may be termed a "double-header" for both a rope restoration and a slate writing mystery are accomplished in combination.

Effect: The performer talks of his discovery of a long hidden secret for restoring broken articles to their original condition. He offers to illustrate with a rope. It is looped between the hands and a spectator cuts the loop at the center. The cut ends are tied, passes are made, and the performer sounds off with invocations. The knot is untied and the rope is found in two pieces!

Only a little discouraged, the performer tosses these into the audience and takes another rope. It, too, is cut and the ends tied together. However, the performer admits that he is not too sure of the correct procedure and might rather ask for aid than fail again. He picks up two slates, showing them on both sides to be blank, and writes on one "Dear Houdini: Please help me out with my 'Neverfail' rope trick. (Signed) Dr. Jacob Daley."

The cut rope is hung over this slate with the knot resting on the upper, written surface. The other slate is placed on top. The hanging ends of the rope are crossed underneath the slate, brought up and tied tightly over the top by a spectator.

After a short interval with soft music the slates are untied. Between the slates now lies a loose knot and the rope is seen to be restored. The original slate still bears the Houdini message, but on the other slate is written: "Dear Jack: I had to do it the hard way. You can have the knot. (Signed) Houdini." Everything may now be handed out for examination.

Requisites: Needed are two slates with the usual single flap, two lengths of soft rope, scissors and chalk. The only preparation required is to write the answer on one of the slates and cover it with the flap. Lay this slate on top of the other one with the flap side up, and set to one side on your table.

The general effect being everything, the actual method of doing the rope trick can be left to the individual performer. Any version making use of the small extra or cut off piece, which is openly tied around the rope proper, is all right. I prefer the standard turban trick moves which allow you to do the trick without preparation. This effect has been explained time and time again, but there is one new twist to it which makes this effect possible. In all versions, the short piece is tied around the center of the long piece, either to be trimmed entirely away, as in the turban trick, or slid off while coiling the rope around the hand. However, when performing this trick, the performer ties the small piece, not around the rope by itself, but around the bight of the rope. The illustration will make it clear, and it has been exaggerated to avoid misunderstanding. When completed, a tight and well tied knot appears to be in the center of the long length of rope. However, a pull on both ends of the long rope will cause the knot to snap free of the rope!



Routine: In order to facilitate the mastering of the subtleties employed, it would be well for the reader to follow the instructions with the articles mentioned at hand.

In the first example, when the rope fails to be restored, the performer uses exactly the same moves he later uses in the second attempt at restoring the rope. However, the necessary turban method move is left out which results in the first rope being actually cut. On the second try, the fake cut provides the short piece and the knot is made as described. The rope is now put around your neck while the slates are brought into play.

Both slates are shown blank. The "Answer" slate is laid on the table, flap side down, while the message to Houdini is being written across one side of the other slate. Holding the writing side of the slate upwards, the rope is now hung across it, from side to side, with the ends hanging down. The knot lays on the top (written) surface. The other slate is picked up from the table, leaving the flap behind, and this slate is laid over the knot, being careful, of course, to hold the "Answer" slate so that no one gets a flash of the writing it contains. Thus the knot is sandwiched in between the two slates.

You are now holding the slates at one end with the left hand in front of your body. The rope ends hang down, one on the side nearest you and the other on the side towards the audience. The right hand takes the end nearest the body and brings it around under the slates and then up over the audience side, across the top, and lets it hang down over the body side again. Then take the end of the rope hanging down on the audience side, bring it underneath towards your body, up and over the slates and let it hang down again on the audience side. But—just as the hand grasps this end, it gives the rope a tug which snaps the knot loose from the rope between the slates!

The right hand now grasps the two hanging ends beneath the slates, the left hand turns the two slates over, which action brings the two ends to the top with the slates hanging underneath, and anyone is asked to tie these ends tightly together. Then that person is allowed to hold the slates.

The trick is finished at this point except for the denouement.

ULTRA ADDITION - DR. JACOB DALEY

Here is Dr. Daley's subtle and convincing method of forecasting the total of an unknown column of figures. There are no loopholes in the routine, and it is as fair as genuine mindreading would be.

Effect: Four people are asked to stand and to think of a three-figured number. The performer looks at each in turn and writes something on a slate he is holding. He then draws a line, is seen to be adding the column of figures and writing the total, and finally he erases the top half of the slate. Laying the slate down without showing it, he announces that he has read the mind of each of the subjects, added the numbers, and now has the correct total written on the slate.

First, though, he suggests a checkup. He approaches the four subjects in turn asking them to jot down their thought-of numbers on a blank card, one number under the other. The problem is then given to a fifth person to add. This person calls the total aloud! Then, as an afterthought, the performer has the original subjects recheck their figures and also call aloud the final total. In short, the total is actually called out five times, during which period the original written numbers are rechecked!

Returning to the front, the performer says, "When I looked at each of you, I read your thoughts, wrote them down, added them up, and now, in absolute proof of the assertion I made originally, I'll show you that my total is exactly the same!" And he does!

Routine: Impossible as this may sound, the convincing details are accomplished by a clever subtlety.

Snap a rubber band around the end of a packet of five or six blank cards. On the bottom card write your fake addition problem, simulating a different handwriting for each row. Draw a line but do not put down the total. Instead, write the total in lead pencil on the frame of your slate. To perform, you need only this packet of cards, a slate, a pencil and a thumb writer gimmick clipped to your thumb nail. (Haden's Swami Holdout is ideal for this effect, and may be purchased from your favorite magic dealer.)

Follow the effect as given. When the slate has been placed on the table after writing, adding and erasing everything but the total, which is that of your fake addition noted on the frame of the slate, you take the packet of cards

from your pocket. Approach the volunteers who are or should be standing. Give each one in turn the pencil and ask him to write his thought-of number on the top blank card of the packet, which you hold while he writes. When the fourth person has finished writing his number in the column, drop your hand to your side and turn over the packet of cards as you approach a fifth person. This person is presented with the previously written faked column, the original bottom card of the packet, and asked to total it. He does so while you hold the cards, and then calls the total aloud.

At this time you step to the front, reversing the packet of cards again, and remark that each person has written his own number, another has added the column, and the total obtained is As you give this

slight resume, you glance at the packet and apparently read off the total. Actually, however, you write with your thumb writer the total of your fake addition under the spectator's original figures. You will have ample time for this as you will find out on your first trial.

Now, as an afterthought, go back to the spectators and have each of them check off his own row, and each one calls the total, as well. They have no time to add, and, after all, they are mainly interested in their own individual row of figures. The climax is then up to you. Give it a big buildup. It deserves it!

Dr. Daley's Variation with Mechanical Slate:

The general effect is almost identical with the foregoing, and your actions throughout are actually what a real thought reader would do.

Four people each think of a three-digit number and the performer looks at each in turn and writes something on his slate, without letting anyone see it. He now draws a line, totals up his addition problem and is seen to be filling in the answer. He now rubs out the various "thought figures" he has collected, turns the slate around to show the total he has gotten and sets the slate up against a supporting book, etc., so that his total will be in evidence throughout the effect. He now takes another slate around to each of the assistants and has them write their mentally thought-of figures in a row, one under the other. Immediately, he hands the slate to a fifth person who totals the sum. This person stands and announces the total which is seen to correspond with what the mentalist has showing on his slate.

Like the first effect, you write any figures in the column you run up on your unprepared slate, but when you come to the total you fill in the actual total you are going to force with the other slate. This total may be noted in pencil on the frame of the slate, so that you will not forget it.

The mechanical slate may be either Baker's or Thayer's Addition Slate, or Dobrin's Double Locking Flap Slate. Lay the half flap over to one side, draw five horizontal lines across the entire slate surface and fill in the upper four spaces with numbers of three digits each, one under the other. Leave the

"total space" empty. The numbers you insert, should vary in the writing but should, of course, add up to the total you are going to force. Now lay the half flap back to the opposite side and lock it. This will hide your figures and leave the slate apparently unmarked. Draw five horizontal lines across the face of the slate with chalk. The working is, of course, obvious. The four assistants write their own numbers on the mechanical slate and, as you hand it to a fifth person to add, you flip the flap over their writing which brings your previously prepared problem into view. As the flap locks, you can hand the slate to this fifth person to add and naturally he gets the same answer that is written on your unprepared slate.

SACRED SCRIPT - GORDON R. McKENNEY

The following is our old friend, the slate trick, all dressed up in new finery and should appeal to those who are looking for something off the beaten path.

Effect: The performer shows four pieces of silicate to be clean on all sides, and two of them are selected by a member of the audience and placed by him in his own pocket, banded together.

Ten cards, each bearing a single figure, and ranging from one to zero, are freely shown, all of them then being mixed by someone. Placing them in his pocket, the performer has four people remove one card each in turn; the selected cards indicating a four-figured number. Let us say that the number selected is 2750. The performer recounts a bit, recalling that two pieces of blank board are being held by the audience, and that a four-figured number has been freely chosen by chance. He throws out the remaining six cards and asks that the boards be separated.

Almost everyone will expect to find the number written on one of the pieces of silicate. But, no! Written in large chalk letters of ancient script is found "NUMBERS IV—36." This is an occasion for conjecture as to what has happened, but suddenly (if no one else has beaten you to it) a bible is mentioned, and the gracious host or hostess provides one. The fourth chapter of the Book of Numbers, verse 36, reads, "And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty." And that's the selected number! Everything can now be examined.

Preparation: You will need four silicate slate flaps about 5 inches by seven inches in size. Write "NUMBERS IV—36" on one flap and place it, message up, third from the top of the stack.

The cards are regular numbered cards, and you will need two sets bearing the numbers from zero to nine. If you do not have a set of these cards, you can easily letter the few that you need. Take the numbers 2-7-5-0 from

one of the sets and put them in your inside coat pocket in correct order from back to face, and with the faces towards your body. Put the remaining six cards of this set in your upper right vest pocket with the faces towards your body. Lay the other set of ten cards on your table with the silicate flaps and you're ready.

Routine: For the cleaning of the flaps and the showing of them to be free of writing, use Dr. Daley's routine already explained in his "Ultra Slate Message," page 172. At the end of this routine, you have forced two of the flaps, one of which bears your written message. Place these face to face, snap a rubber band around them and give them to someone to place in his pocket.

Next pick up the set of ten cards from the table, shuffle them and show them for what they are. Pass them out if you like and finally take them back in your left hand and put them in the inside coat pocket, on the body side of those already there. Holding the coat open with your right hand, pass to four people in turn and have each reach into your pocket and pull out a card. Work this part without hesitation or stalling, and the force cards will be taken out in the correct order. Have the number on each card announced as it is withdrawn.

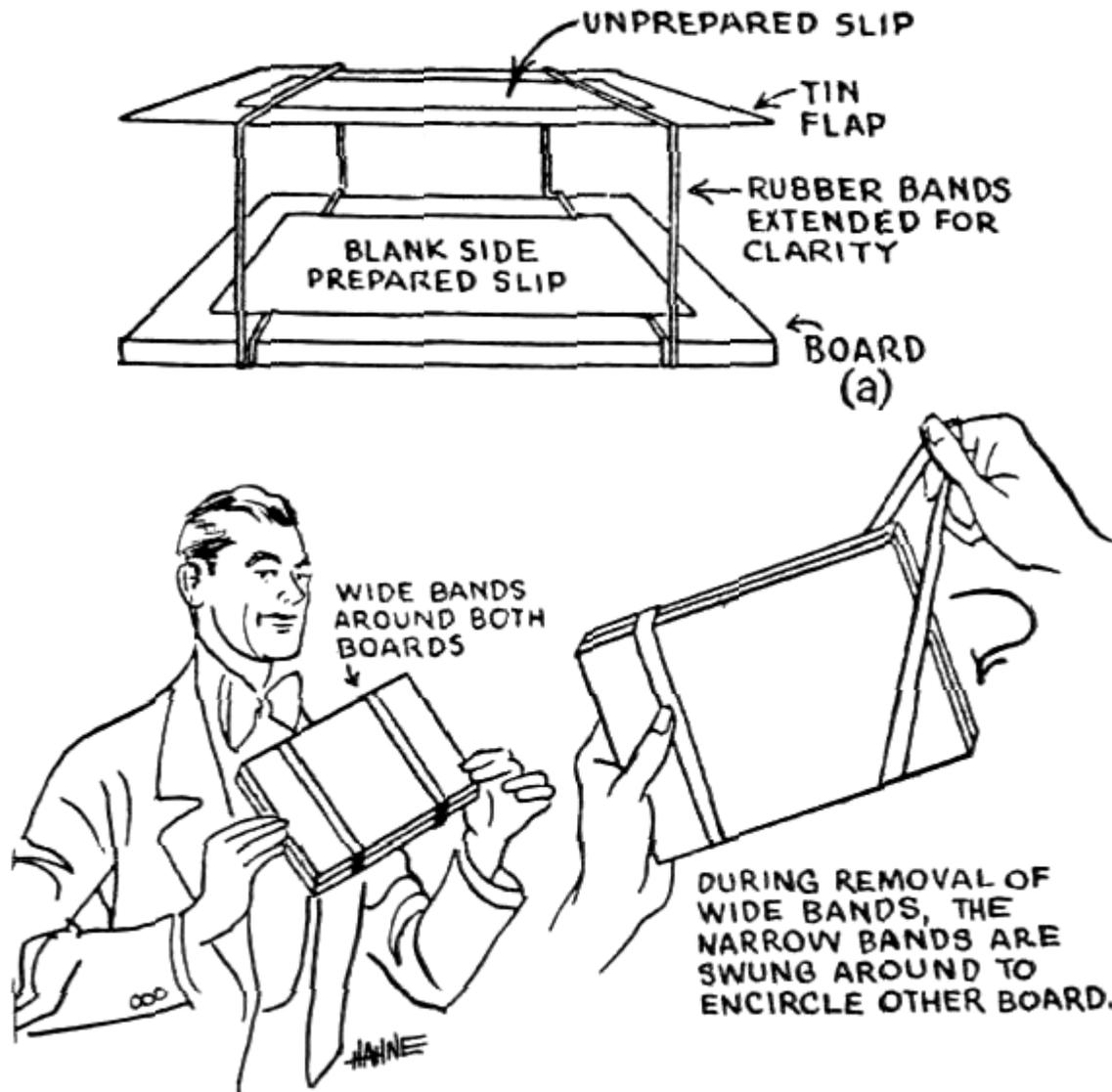
This four-figured number is then repeated a time or two, and while doing so you apparently reach into your pocket and take out the remaining cards. However, you really take out the six cards from your vest pocket instead, and toss them on the table. Thus everything will check for the skeptics later. The climax is now in order. Most people think of the Bible immediately. The effect builds from the point where they expect to see the numbers on the boards and are surprised when they find something else. The trick is really an ideal pocket item and, merely as a suggestion to those with inventive minds, the Book of Numbers has many verses with all kinds of combinations.

TRIBAL TRY - LEN SEWELL

(Editor's Note: The following effect is Bart unusual. The brilliant originality in the handling of the flap in connection with two boards is far and away superior to the usual slate method, and when properly presented will baffle anyone familiar with slates. We urge you to give it a trial, for it is really very easy once the principle is understood.)

Effect: The performer shows two blackboards which measure about 6x9 inches. One board is encircled with two rubber bands, under which the performer inserts a blank piece of white paper. The second board is now placed on top of the paper, and both boards are encircled with two more rubber bands. The slates are now stood against the back of a chair, resting on the seat.

Now a name, number, or object is chosen by the audience. The large bands are removed and the boards are separated. Still attached to one board, by the elastic bands, is the piece of paper. That paper now bears either a picture of the person who was named, an inscription of the number mentioned, or a sketch of the object chosen.



Method: It all happens between the boards. The apparatus, if it can be called such, is very simply constructed. The sketches and description to follow will make clear the entire operation. It is a sort of tricky difference between "little" and "big" rubber bands. The small ones hold the paper onto the boards whereas the large ones hold the boards themselves together. Between the two, much happens.

Used are two blackboards, one tin flap to match, four thin elastic bands, two broad elastic bands and two pieces of white paper about 5 inches x 7 inches. On one of the papers write your prediction, name, number or object.

Following is an outline of the principle employed, and if you will follow the moves with three silicate flaps in hand and the necessary elastic bands,

the idea will clarify itself very readily. The theory behind the manipulations is simply this: The small elastic bands are utilized to transfer the flap and the papers from one board to the other, under the perfectly natural actions of removing the large bands.

One board (a) is encircled by two small (thin) elastic bands, about six inches apart. Your prepared message is now laid on this board, and across the elastic bands, written side to the board. On top of this paper is laid the tin flap. This is now secured to the board by two more thin elastic bands, also placed six inches apart so that they overlay and coincide with the first two bands encircling the board. Thus the prepared message paper is sandwiched between the board and the flap, and they may be turned around and shown on both sides, appearing as a single board with but two elastic bands encircling it about an inch and a half from each end.

The unprepared slip is shown on both sides to be blank, and is secured to board (a) by slipping it under the elastic bands on the flap side. The second board (b) is now laid on top of the paper slip, and the two boards are secured together by encircling them with two broad elastic bands, which overlap and cover the elastic bands around board (a).

Our problem now is to transfer the flap and both papers from board (a) to board (b), and that is done as follows: Turn the boards over so that board (a) is on top. Hold the boards with your left hand, with the narrow end facing the audience and tilted slightly downwards. Slip your right finger tips under *all* the elastic bands at the far end of the board, lift the elastic bands up and, still holding them clipped by the first joints of the fingers, bring your hand towards the left edge of the boards, then down and around under towards the right edge. As your hand passes the front end of the boards, the thin elastic bands are allowed to slip off the finger tips and immediately are transferred to the lower board. The right hand continues down and away, bringing with it the large elastic band which is now free of the boards. To the audience, of course, this appears as though you just removed the large band from the boards, which is exactly what you want them to think. They know nothing of the thin bands which you transferred under cover of the removal of the large band.

Turn the boards around, end for end, and repeat the same movements with the other elastic bands, taking away the large band. Now remove the top board (a), and things look exactly as they did at first, with the slip secured to the lower board (b) by two elastics. But, the slip now bears your spirit message which can be seen by everyone, because the slip they are looking at is your prepared one, while the blank one is now sandwiched between the flap and the board, and, of course, cannot be seen.

The Force: The request for names, which can be revealed by letters or depicted by sketches, is tricked by the performer writing down names, not as called, but all alike. An excellent alternative is to write names as called, using

2 inch x 3 inch slips of paper. Let a member of the audience watch the proceedings and jot down each name.

As each is written, crumple it up and drop it onto a hat, but do not let him see you tuck the first one, the force paper, under the hatband. This one later is retrieved after the hat has been shaken up a bit. All the other papers were honestly written. You pick out two papers, one at a time, and toss them away, then come out with your force paper from under the hatband. Thus you have complete control of your force paper throughout and everything seems perfectly fair.

DUO TELEPATHY - ROBERT H. PARRISH

Many methods of transmitting information are available, but for simplicity of effect and directness of procedure, this slate routine will be found hard to beat.

Effect: The assisting spectator thinks of any card, removes it from the deck, and holds it up for all to see. The medium, notwithstanding the fact that she is seated with her back to the audience, takes the slate and chalk and immediately inscribes on the slate the name of the chosen card. The performer now hands another slate to the spectator and asks him to draw, in view of all, any simple geometric design that occurs to him. It is no sooner completed than the medium cries, "I have an impression!" and immediately reproduces on the slate the very same drawing, although obviously she could not see what the spectator had drawn!

Requirements: This short mental routine for two people is as simple as it is effective. In both cases, the information is relayed to the medium via a thumb tip writer worn by the performer, but the ruse employed is slightly different in each case.

These thumb writers are on sale at all magical dealers and are of two general types. One is a short thumb tip with lead attached to the ball of the thumb. The other is a small clip which attaches to the thumb nail itself. Only a few trials are necessary to ascertain which is the most practical for each individual. Besides a thumb tip, two slates are required, as well as a pack of cards and a fairly long piece of chalk. On one side the chalk has been shaved a bit so as to make a nice flat surface on which a few pencilled notations may be made.

Presentation: In introducing this effect, the performer holds a slate and a piece of chalk and outlines briefly the details of the test and just what the medium, who may be blindfolded, will attempt to do. He requests the full cooperation of everyone in the audience; and suggests that if they will but concentrate at the proper time the tests should be a success. From this point

on not another word is spoken by the performer until the first test is completed.

The performer seats the medium in a chair next to a table with her back to the audience. He lays the slate on the table, picks up a deck of cards and hands it to someone to make a selection. The performer stands facing the audience during the removal of the card with his right hand dropped to his side. On his right thumb he has his thumb writer, and this hand also has retained the piece of chalk.

It is but the work of a second to slip the chalk into position between the fingers and to thumb write the initials of the selected card on the flat surface of the chalk. The moment the performer writes down the initials of the card, he picks up the slate from the table and hands it, along with the chalk, to the medium. She quickly works up to her first climax by writing on the slate the name of the card she finds noted on the chalk, and then holds the slate above her head for all to see what she has written.

The performer again takes the slate and, while quickly erasing it, asks a spectator if he would like to assist in another test but a much more difficult one. He will, of course, agree, so the performer hands him another slate with the suggestion that he draw some simple design or geometrical figure; and then show it to the rest of the audience so that all may concentrate upon the figure. The performer still holds the medium's slate, and is again wearing the thumb writer. His arm hangs naturally at his side. Once the performer catches sight of the figure being drawn he reproduces it on the edge of the slate, via the thumb nail writer, as well as he is able under the circumstances. Since these figures are seldom more than a triangle, circle or parallelogram, the medium should be able to make it out.

During this time she has been listening to the spectator writing on his slate, and as soon as the sound of the scratching chalk ceases, she cries, "I have an impression." The performer immediately hands her the slate he is holding. With appropriate pauses and flashes of inspiration, the medium quickly reproduces the drawing and stands up, slate in hand, to reveal it and take her bow.

SLATE IMMORTALITY - ROBERT PARRISH

The effect of this startling variation in Living and Dead Tests first appeared in Annemann's publication "Sh-h-h!! It's a secret."

On an unprepared slate the performer writes a row of six figures from 1 to 6 in a column down the left side. The slate is handed to a spectator to write the name of some dead person, known only to himself, after any one of the six figures. This is done while the performer's back is turned.

The slate is handed to another person who writes the name of a living person after any of the remaining figures. This is repeated until six names are written on the slate, one of which is a dead person's name among five "living" names.

The performer is given the slate and, concentrating upon it, he asks the spectator who wrote the "dead name" to think of the person as he last saw him. The performer starts rubbing the slate with a cloth. Then he asks the spectator to speak the name aloud. Turning the slate over, the audience is shown that all the living names have been erased and *only the dead name is left untouched!*

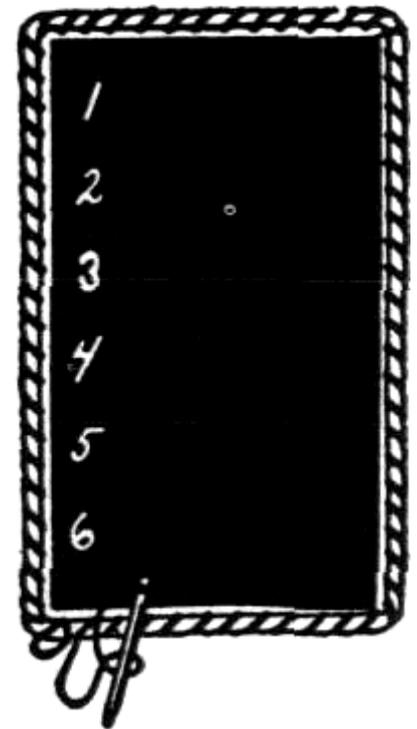
This is truly a nice effect and is accomplished by the simplest of methods. It is only necessary for the performer to know which name has been written first. After the first person has written the dead name, the performer approaches him and takes the slate by the top with his left hand. Calling attention to the fact that he does not make any attempt to see what has been written, the performer transfers the slate to his right hand, taking it with the thumb behind and the second finger on audience side, the finger being near the top edge on the right side. The finger is far enough in on the slate so that it rubs across the name as the right hand slides downward to grasp the slate firmly near the bottom. This action is perfectly natural and the finger merely slips over the slate surface without any pressure. Thus, the dead name, wherever it may be, is crossed and a resultant blur of its chalk is made with a very slight streak visible below.

This is done as the slate is handed to another person within two or three seats of the first. After this name (living) the performer handles the slate again, but from then on merely directs each spectator to pass the slate to someone near him.

It is only necessary now for the performer to take the slate and erase all names except the streaked one.

This effect is one of perfect mental misdirection for the onlookers always seem to believe that it is necessary for the performer to *know* the name, they do not realize that it is only necessary for him to know *where* the name is. There is no conceivable way in which he can know *what* the name is, so they are completely thrown off the right scent.

A Variation: Mr. Parrish has worked out a completely novel effect using this principle, basing his patter on the identification of individuals through their handwriting. Have a column of three figures on the slate. Three different



people each write a word before one of the numbers. The performer now looks at the slate and tells which person wrote each word, though his back was turned during the writing.

Proceed with the first person just as described in the first effect. Ditto with the second person, only your finger is extended a bit more than before. No trickery is employed with the last writer. Now by looking at the slate, the performer will find two slight chalk traces below the word written by person No. 1, and only one streak under the word written by person No. 2.

HALF AND HALF - STEWART JAMES

Do not pass up this effect because of the layout of the tables. The effect is stunning and is truly a miracle from the audience's viewpoint.

Effect: The visible apparatus consists of three dice, an apparently meaningless list of letters, two slates and a piece of chalk.

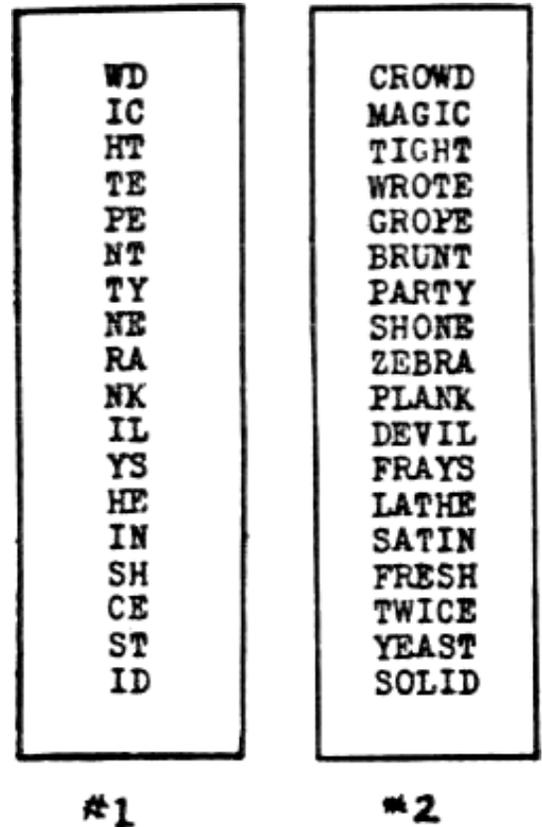
The list first used is that shown in Figure 1. You write something on one slate and place it to one side. No one sees what you have written.

An interested spectator rolls the dice until satisfied that they are fair. Then comes the important throw of the cubes. The total is noted. Let us say that it is ten. The spectator locates the pair of letters tenth from the top of the column and proceeds to write them on the second slate. The letters will be found to be NK.

The performer hands the spectator a second list which, when placed beside the first, reveals a completed list of eighteen words. They read as per the list shown in figure No. 2.

The word at the tenth position is PLANK, the last two letters of which the volunteer has just written on his slate. Your slate now is turned so that its writing side faces the audience as it is placed beside the spectator's slate. The word is completed. The performer's slate bears PLA, the first three letters.

Preparation: With three dice, the smallest number that can be thrown is 3 and the largest will be 18. If an odd number is tossed, you have volunteer count off that many rows of letters and note what comes up next. When an even number is thrown he is directed to count to that number and note the letters at that number. In either case, only letters at an even-numbered position may be selected.



As two cannot be thrown this narrows the possible selections to 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, or 18.

You also have eight separate lists for the groups of three letters, as illustrated. The numbers shown over the lists are for your personal use and knowledge, and, of course, do not appear on the lists proper.

In my own case I carry each list in a separate envelope with the numbers lightly penciled on the inside of the flap.

In preparing for the trick, arrange the envelopes in your pocket in a known order. Four, six and eight are in your left coat pocket; ten and twelve are in your inside coat pocket; and fourteen, sixteen and eighteen are in your right coat pocket.

Routine: Introduce the list (Figure 1) of two-letter combinations, the dice and the slates. Secretly print PLA on one slate and place aside as volunteer tests the dice. The dice now are rolled and the total taken. In most cases you can total the dice quickly and remove the proper list from your pocket before the volunteer has announced the result.

Suppose the total to be eleven. You have removed the envelope, secretly marked twelve, from your inside coat pocket and are holding it. Tell him to count down eleven two-letter combinations, note the next and write it on his slate. It will be YS.

4

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6

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TWI
YEA
PLA

On handing him your list to place beside his, he finds that the word at that position is PLAYS. Holding the two slates together, with the writing on both showing, the word PLAYS is revealed.

Although the word was selected so fairly, to all appearances you must have known what word it would be. As a matter of fact, you don't as no particular word is forced. Reasoning further, the list is not exchanged for half of it is already in the volunteer's hands. The prediction is not switched for your written-on slate is never again touched by you. The prediction is direct with no double meaning.

NUMERO! - AL BAKER

Here is one of those rare effects that has an anticlimax but becomes greater because of it. The basis of the trick, the addition part, is not new but Mr. Baker has woven around it a bit of chicanery which dresses up the problem in a not easily forgotten guise.

Effect: A spectator is chosen for the problem, and is handed a folded paper upon which the performer has scribbled something. Showing a large size slate, the performer hands him chalk with the request that he write down a line of figures as they come to mind. Immediately under this row the performer jots a row and the spectator follows with a third. Then the performer finishes quickly by writing a fourth and fifth line. Drawing a line underneath, the spectator is handed slate for adding. The total is read aloud and shown. Opening the folded paper, the spectator finds prophesied the correct total! So far nothing original has happened, but wait! The performer shows the back of the slate on which has been inscribed the letters of the alphabet, each letter followed by a numeral from 1 to 0, see illustration. The spectator is asked his first or last name. *Substituting letters for the figures of the problem's total, this spectator's name is found to be revealed by that row of figures!*

It will be realized immediately by many that this also makes a valuable effect as a publicity trick with a pad of paper. Although it will puzzle a mathematician, and it will confound magicians who know only the addition effect, the mechanics are so simple that it practically becomes an impromptu stunt.

Preparation: First you must know the name of the person with whom you are going to work the effect. It may be either his first or last name, so long as it isn't more than six letters long, in which case another name is secured. On the back of the slate or pad have the alphabet and numerals written as per the chart.

Before the test, write down the name of the person, and with the chart, substitute the letters for figures. If the name were Harry, the letters would equal 81885. This is all you need know before starting. On a piece of paper write the five figures and place a 2 in front of them, making a number prophecy of 281885 for the spectator to hold. Now add 2 to the last figure of the number representing the name of the person, in this case changing the number to 81887. This number is your key number to be remembered. If the last

A	1	K	1	U	1
B	2	L	2	V	2
C	3	M	3	W	3
D	4	N	4	X	4
E	5	O	5	Y	5
F	6	P	6	Z	6
G	7	Q	7		
H	8	R	8		
I	9	S	9		
J	0	T	0		

figure of the original name number is an 8 or 9, this rule holds good although adding the 2 affects the last two figures of the number instead of only the last one. If the number were 71288 it would change to 71290 by adding the 2.

Routine: Present the problem by handing the correct person the folded slip and ask him to place it in his pocket or otherwise hide it. Without showing the chart side of the slate or pad, ask him to write a row of five figures. Have him put down the same number of figures in the row as there are letters in his name, although you don't tell him this. Thus, in this case, you have him write a row of five figures. If the name were John he would be told to write four. You quickly put down the second row under his, and write the key number you have memorized. He writes the third row and you write the last two. The rule that governs the writing of the last two rows is the "nine" rule relating to the top and the third lines. Thus, in writing the fourth line, you watch the first line and put down figures which, added to the figures directly above each one, total nine. If the top row is 63052, the fourth line will be 36947. The fifth row is written while watching the third row and the same rule applies. Then the line is drawn and the spectator adds the problem.

The resulting sum will be exactly what you have prophesied on the folded slip he has pocketed. That's the first climax. Now explain that you will go further and that there is an unknown force or power at work when the spectator jots down his numbers at random. Ask him for his first or last name, as the case may be. Then turn over the slate or pad. On it is the list of letters and figures as listed here. You may remark that you have numbered the letters over and over somewhat as is done by numerologists. Don't say "as done *exactly* by them" because numerologists leave out the zero in their computations. There will be, in each case, one more figure in the total than there are letters in the name. Say, therefore, that you will use only the correct number of figures as they were written down in the total. Counting from right to left you cross out the first figure. He names the first letter, H. The figure after the letter H is 8, so you write H under the 8 in the total. He names the second letter, A. The figure after A is 1, so A is written under the second figure

in total. This continues until finished *and the name of the spectator assisting is seen to coincide exactly with the total of the problem he helped assemble!*

The presentation of this effective idea may be varied by using two slates. One contains the chart, while the other is used for the problem. Start by having the spectator who assists put the chart slate (without it being shown) under his chair, or in a safe place. Now you write something on one side of the slate and announce that it is a prophecy. Don't show it but continue by having the problem written on the other side. When the total is read aloud, turn the slate over to show your prognostication correct. Now have the spectator take his slate and show the chart. Ask him the first letter of his name. He says H. Ask him what figure is after the letter on the slate. He say 8. Then you openly write H under the first 8 on your slate. Continue to this manner, which is very effective, as the audience doesn't realize you know the name beforehand and it is fascinating to watch the name build up under the total.

Although, at the start, this stunt may appear a bit complicated, I doubt if anyone will have trouble understanding and making it work if he will just try it out on a piece of paper to get the idea clearly in mind. Many who know the nine principles of the addition are still thrown off, because even that part is not done in the same order as the old trick. The smart ones generally look for adjoining lines to total nine, disregarding separated lines.

There are but two operations before presenting it; changing the name to figures, followed by memorizing the key number. Try to use last names whenever possible.

THE SUPER SLATES - ANNEMANN

For many years dealer's catalogues have listed the "Spirit Slates" where two slates and one flap make a spirit message possible. A moot question is, "why does a message appear only on one side?" In this version, after the two slates have been shown and numbered openly on four sides, they are opened to show a genuine chalk message on the inside of each slate, and they may be left with the audience for thorough examination. It would be best to follow these directions with a pair of slates and a flap in hand.

Put a message on one side of one slate and in the upper left corner of the slate write the figure 1. Cover this with the flap. On one side of the second slate write another message, or continue the first message. Mark this side with the figure 4. Lay this slate, with the message side down, on the first slate with the flap and keep all numbers to the front end towards the audience.

Pick up the slates, and holding them together and tipped forward a little, so that the top surface can be seen, the first or top slate is slid off and put under the second slate. State that you will number each side, and chalk in the figure 1 on the upper left corner of the top slate (flap). With the same move as

before, slide this slate off and put it underneath. Mark the new surface with the figure 2. Now turn the two slates completely over (never end for end—numbers always stay at the front end) and mark the new surface with the figure 3. Lift this slate off and put it underneath (the flap has dropped off onto the top of the bottom slate) marking the new surface (back of flap) with the figure 4. Now—with a remark about the slates having been marked, slide the top slate off about an inch to the right and, grasping it near the upper right corner with the right thumb underneath and fingers on top, turn it outward—end for end—and at the same time bring it underneath the top slate and square them. The flap is on this slate, held in place by the fingers, and the two slates are placed on the table for a moment. You pick up a ribbon, or preferably a large and heavy rubber band. Now pick up the two slates, leaving the flap behind. Remarking that they will be securely tied together, make the same move as just described, turning over the top slate and bringing it back under the other. The messages are now both inside and the slates are fastened together. When revealed, everything can be examined and the numbering all checks perfectly.

Be careful when handling that the undersides of the slates cannot be seen as the messages are there several times. These moves are all simple and, although it may take several readings with the slates in hand to master the moves, you will be more than satisfied and pleased with the result. You can vary the effect by having the names of cards appear, one on each slate. Or again, have on each slate the answer to separate questions. Finding writing on both slates after openly numbering them will fool everyone, even well posted conjurers.

GABBATHA - I. G. THOMPSON, JR.

Dabblers in things of a spiritualistic nature should be interested in the following effect which has been routined for small gatherings of the intimate type. It can be carried in the vest pocket and performed practically impromptu at any time. Its running time is about seven minutes.

The performer asks a spectator to write the initials of a dead person on one of seven small white cards, explaining that from this point on the card will represent the deceased person and that his burial will be re-enacted. On the six remaining pasteboards, the spectator is told to write the initials of six living persons who will act as pall-bearers for the "dead" man.

This done, the "dead name card" is to be placed somewhere in the stack of pall-bearers, while the performer stands at a distance. Picking up the stack of seven cards at finger tips, the performer drops them in a borrowed hat, calling this the "cemetery."

He then explains that the dead man was a sincere believer in spiritualism and that he had left a pair of sealed slates with a friend sometime before his death, stating that he would attempt to "come back" and manifest his return. At this point the performer exhibits two small slates, numbers the four sides, binds them together with a rubber band, and hands them to a member of the audience.

Suddenly remembering the "pall-bearers" are still in the "cemetery," he remarks that it might be a good plan to see that they got home safely. Holding the hat high above his head, he has a spectator reach in and mix up the cards after which six of them are removed, one by one, and laid face down on the table, leaving one in the hat.

The performer now asks the spectator to examine the cards to see if the correct one was "buried." The cards are turned face up and prove to be the six "pall-bearers." The slates are opened by the person holding them, and on one side are the two initials which match those on the "dead name card" remaining in the hat! Gabbatha!

Requirements: You will need two miniature vest pocket slates, 2" x 2¹/₄", with flap; seven plain white cards, 1¹/₄" x 2"; and a rubber band. To prepare the cards for use in this effect, one of them is coated on one side with Simonize (auto polish), allowed to soak for a few minutes, then polished briskly with a piece of cotton and set aside to dry over night. With a card thus prepared in a pile of ordinary cards, the packet will cut at the "slick" card with a slight pressure and pushing movement to either side.

Take the flap of the slate and write the figure "2" on one side of it. Now stack the slates with the flap, written side down, on the upper surface of the lower slate. Place the rubber band in your right trouser pocket and you are set to start.

Routine: The spectator writes the first and last initials of the "dead name" on the smooth side of the "slick" card; the living names on the ordinary cards. He then mixes up the cards and returns them to you, and you very carefully take them by your finger tips with the right thumb underneath and the first and middle fingers on top of the stack. You now place the stack of cards in the hat, but as your hand momentarily goes out of sight, tilt it a bit and with your thumb push lightly on the cards towards the right. The packet will cut at the "slick" card and the "dead" initials can be read. Slide the "dead card" to one side where it can be reached easily when the hat is next picked up. Set the hat aside for a moment.

Show the slates freely, then stack them and place them lengthwise on your left palm with one end pressed against the base of the thumb, and with your left fingers curled around the other end.

Write "1" on the upper surface, then turn the slate over by grasping the edge farthest from you and turning it towards your body. Apparently write "2" on the new upper surface of the slate, but instead write the "dead name" initials you just glimpsed. Turn the slate as before and then turn both slates completely over together. This action will cause the flap to drop onto the lower slate and cover the initials you just wrote and, at the same time, will bring the "2" previously written on the flap into its correct position. Write "3" on the new top surface, and finally turn the single slate over writing "4" on the last side.

Make a final turn and place this slate below the other which brings the flap surface uppermost. With your left thumb slide the top slate to the finger tips, holding the flap in place with your thumb. Exhibit it on both sides, showing figures "1" and "2," and pass it to the right hand, which is held with the back to the floor. The slate is held with its side edge towards the floor and laying along the forefinger, the right thumb being on the upper edge. As the left hand exhibits the other slate to show the sides marked "3" and "4," the right hand tilts slightly towards the body and the flap falls into a perfect finger palm on the second and third joints of the middle and third fingers.

Slide the left hand slate behind the one in your right hand, and then the left hand goes into the left pocket searching for a rubber band. Not finding it, you transfer the slates to your left hand and carry the palmed flap to your right pocket, where you deposit it and bring out the band. This is snapped around the slates before handing them to the spectator to hold.

As the hat is picked up by the right hand to have the cards mixed, your right thumb goes outside of the brim with the fingers inside, where they pull the "dead name card" against the side of the hat. Hold it here during the subsequent mixing and withdrawal of the six pall-bearer cards.

While it has taken some time and space to describe the actual movements throughout, the actual working is smooth and the patter scheme fits all of the action. Although slightly long, it makes an excellent press stunt where the occasion permits.

GHOST WRITER - CLAYTON RAWSON

Effect: A freely selected card, inserted face up into the face down deck while all is held behind a spectator's back, is further protected by his wrapping the cards in a handkerchief. The performer shows two slates, puts them together, and the deck in its covering placed on top. After an incantation the pack of cards is unwrapped and spread. The card below the faced one is shown. The performer slides the slates apart to show its name written on one surface. Then the card above the reversed one is revealed. And the performer shows, written across the surface of the other slate, its name, too!

Preparation: This is a favorite of mine because of the simplicity plus the effect gained. The slates have the usual flap. On the flap write the name of the top (face down) card of the deck. On one slate write the name of the second card from the bottom of the deck. Put the two chalked sides of flap and slate together, and you are set.

Routine: Dovetail shuffle the deck, keeping the two important cards in place. Fan the deck for a selection. Square the deck, and have the selected card placed face up on the face down deck. Instruct the spectator to insert his card somewhere in the deck while he holds it behind his back. As you put the deck behind his back, merely turn it over. He inserts what he thinks to be the top card into the deck. Then he is told to cut the pack several times. And lastly you take out your breast pocket handkerchief and have him wrap up the deck, still behind his back. No one living could know the result of his action. Yet the face up card he chose now rests between the two pasteboards you have wanted to force, and the wrapping keeps everyone from discovering that the deck was turned.

The slates are shown, put together, and the flap dropped. From here on it is simply a case of revelation as described.

NONPAREIL - STANLEY COLLINS

In the almost innumerable versions of the slate effect, the conjurer has to force the choice of the particular figure, word, phrase, etc., he desires to magically produce. The trick I am about to describe enables the performer after having offered a perfectly *free selection* of any card from a pack, to produce an enlargement of it on a previously marked slate.

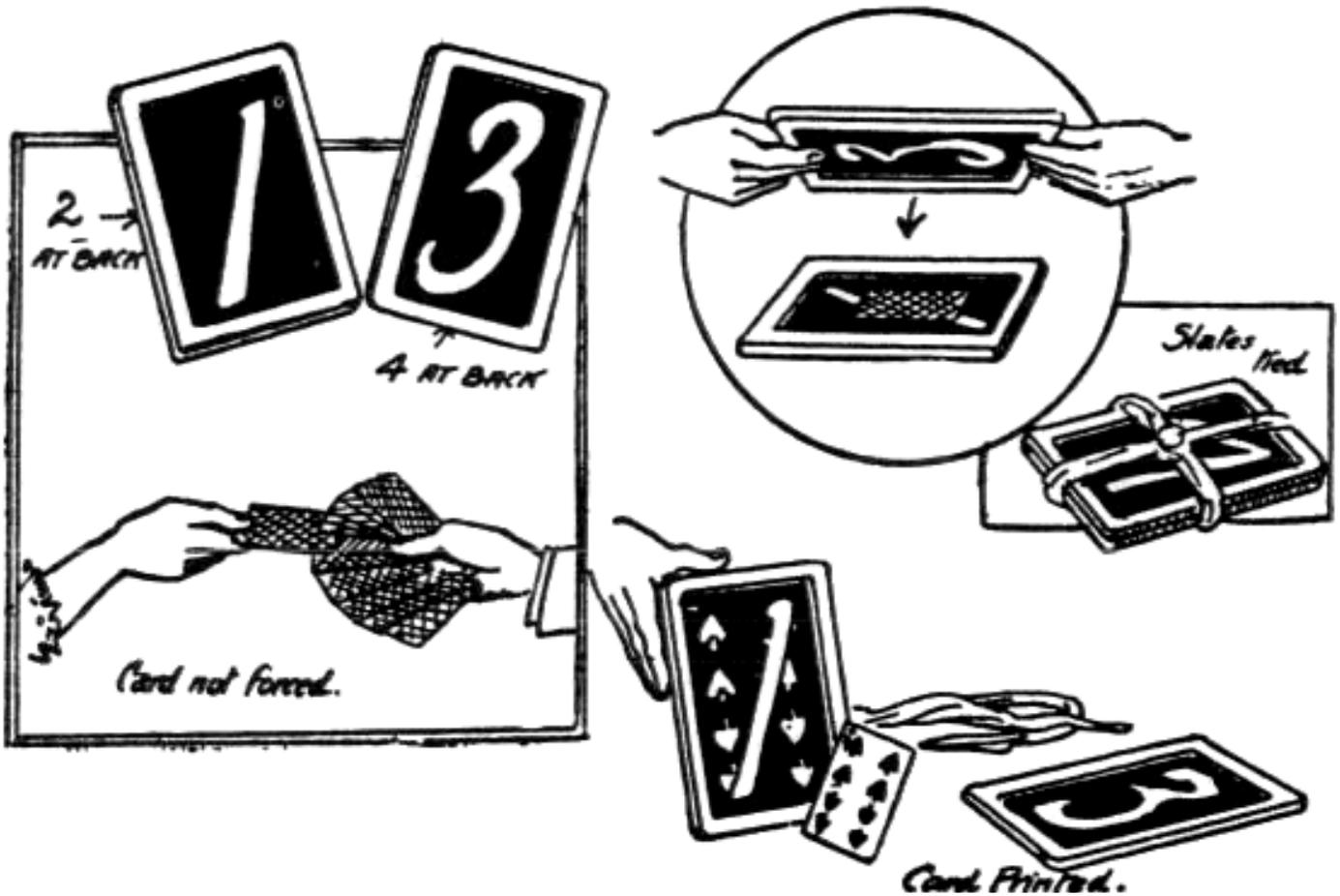
Preparation: Of the two slates in use, one is previously provided with a large figure 1 drawn from one corner to the other through a chart sketch of a pip card, say, the 8 of Spades, as large as the slate itself.

To mask this preparation, the familiar flap is again requisitioned, one side of which is marked with a large figure 3. Before placing the flap on the slate, the 8 of Spades is removed from the pack and laid face downward on the sketch of itself. The figure 3 on the flap must face the prepared side of the slate so that when in position both sides will appear blank.

Routine: Advancing with the ordinary and the unprepared slate in left hand, the flap is marked openly with a large figure 1, and the opposite side of slate with a large figure 2.

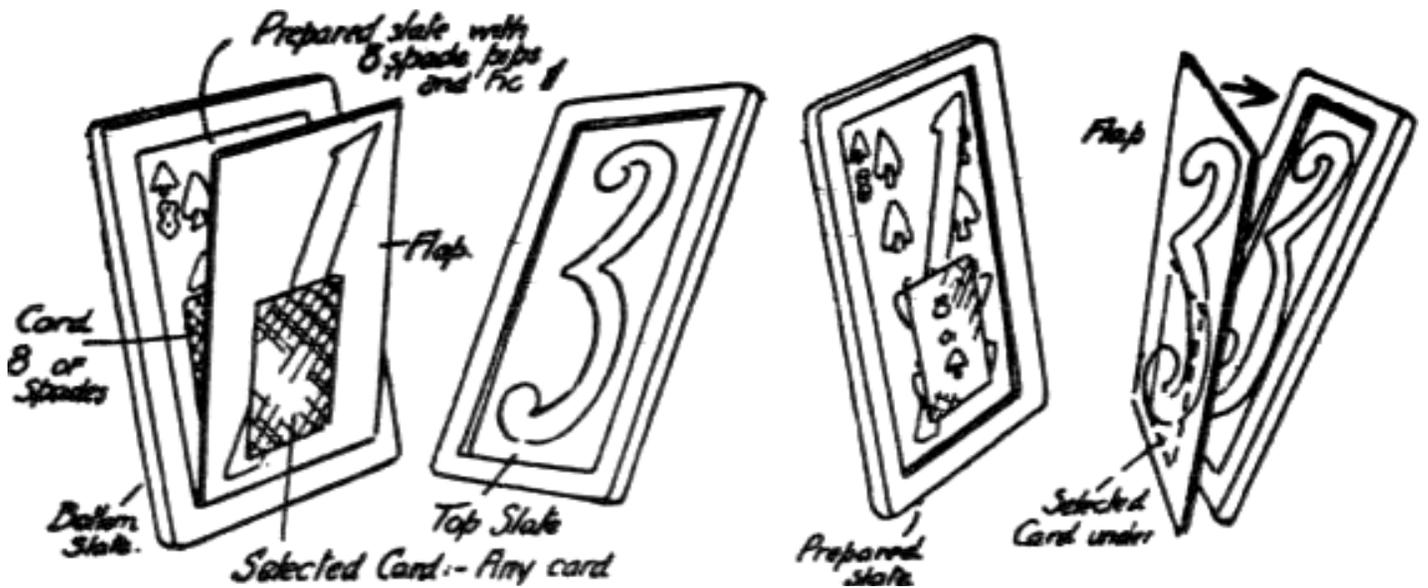
The second slate is numbered with a 3 on one side and a 4 on the other, these numbers, as the performer explains, being written for identification purposes. Presenting a well shuffled pack of cards to a spectator, he or she is asked to draw one and place it face downward on slate 1 without looking at it.

The patter must be arranged so as to misdirect the real motive for this action, emphasis being laid on the fact that no one must know the card selected. The slates are now placed together, care being taken that the figure 3 on one side faces the 1 on the flap of the other.



While they are being tied with a ribbon, the positions are reversed so that the flap slate is on top of the other. By this arrangement the flap will fall onto the 3 side of the unprepared slate, carrying with it and hiding the selected card. (If the slates were to be separated at this point, the writing and the duplicate force card would appear.) And this is exactly what happens when the slates are untied! The 8 of Spades, supposedly the selected card, is revealed laying face up on the No. 3 (flap) side, while the top slate's inside surface is seen to have its picture in chalk. The entire action of this slate maneuver is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

The right hand tips the card from the flap slate over onto the surface of the left hand slate with sketch and the flap slate is tossed with flap side down upon your table as you come forward and pass the left hand slate out



to the selector of the card. Saying, "And here is your material proof of something beyond the veil working in our interests," you then take back the slate, continuing, "You may keep the card as a constant reminder of occurrences strange. I need the slate for future attempts to pass an hitherto insurmountable barrier."

MY CASE - CLARENCE HUBBARD

Effect: "There are people," begins the performer, "who just don't believe in anything, even when they see it before their very eyes. They are the skeptics of the world who hold back and retard progress in almost every line of creative endeavor. My experiment now is to duplicate the accomplishment of many spiritualistic mediums—that of receiving a written message from "the happy summer land," that part of the veiled universe where departed souls live, and strive to make their thoughts and wishes made known to us still among the living."

The performer shows a single slate to be clean on both sides. He asks two close-by spectators to initial each side, one of whom then holds the slate close to his body for the time being.

"While messages have been received countless times under as stringent conditions as this," he continues, "the unbelievers talk of trickery, and that is why I want to try and prove otherwise. I don't want to know what is going to be the result, that is, if we are successful in establishing a contact with the far beyond. For test purposes I cannot ask any certain one of you to help. We must leave that selection to chance."

The performer-medium passes out ten envelopes, each containing a blank card. He calls attention to the fact that each envelope is numbered from

1 to 10. Each spectator receiving one is to write a simple query upon his card and then seal it inside the accompanying envelope.

The performer follows this up by collecting the envelopes on a tray, and dumping them into another person's lap.

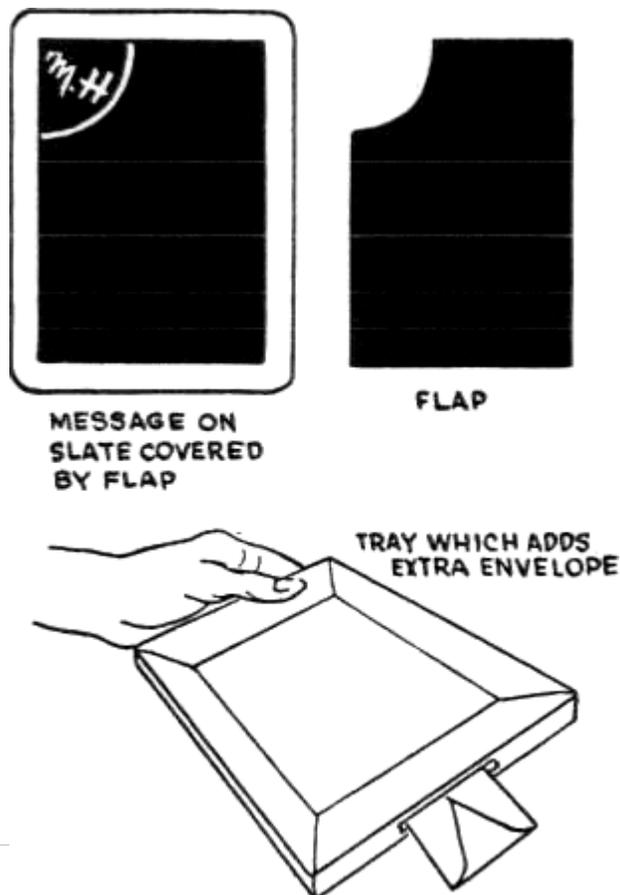
"It's best that I don't touch your envelopes," he says. Next he takes from his side coat pocket a handful of counters. "There are ten of these," the performer blandly remarks, as he drops them into the hands of still another person. "You see?" He takes them back. "One counter and only one will be picked." He drops them back into his side coat pocket and, shaking the pocket, holds it open for a selection by the spectator. "The number?" asks the wizard. Perhaps it is 8. He turns toward the man with the envelopes. "Find the envelope numbered 8, open it, and read aloud so everyone can hear the question inside."

The spectator does so. It might be something such as, "Will a state of war exist between the United States of America and Germany?"

The performer nods to an acknowledgment of the question, and tells the man with the envelopes to pass the rest of them around, as they are of no further use.

"And thus we've found and determined upon a question which no one of us could have foretold would be asked or selected." The performer says this as he approaches the man who has been guarding the slate. "Honestly, now," he asks that person, "Do you think that anyone has had access to the slate you hold, or that any entity of an invisible nature might have been close by?" It's a tricky question and the person will have to hesitate. The audience takes this for indecision and you take advantage of the stall by reaching for the slate and asking, "Those are your initials, aren't they?" Then you call the other "initial man" forward. He sees the other side of the slate and agrees when you ask if his initials aren't there also.

Then you turn the slate around towards the audience. It bears a chalked on message! and the writing could read something like, "WAR IS HELL!" which is a perfect answer to the question asked. We would like to finish by saying, "And that, my friends, is proof enough that from another level of being has come an answer as well as a warning."



Preparation: A single slate bearing a flap with a semi-circular piece cut out of one corner, and a metal or wooden tray, built on the lines of the "money tray" so as to deliver an extra envelope at the right time. See illustrations.

To get back to the flap slate. The answer to your forced question is chalked onto the slate, a semicircle is drawn in one corner and this side is covered with the flap. This is laid on the table, together with the envelopes and the tray. In the false bottom of the tray is your extra envelope, marked No. 8, in which is sealed your force question.

Routine: Pick up the slate and show it on both sides as you talk, and at that time you chalk on a semi-circle in one corner on each side. When marking your semicircle on the flap side, your chalk follows the cut edge of the flap. The chalked line effectively hides the line of demarcation between the flap and the slate proper. It is in this corner that the first spectator marks his initials, which go onto the slate itself. At this time you go back and drop the slate onto your table. Then, as an afterthought, pick it up again, minus the flap, and have a second person step forward. He initials the unprepared side in its designated corner, and you push the slate under his coat, asking him to hold it.

The envelopes are stacked on your tray, so you pick it up and pass among the spectators, asking several people to take one until they are gone. You hold the tray at the opening side for the distribution, and also for the collection of them. Thus you do not handle the envelopes at any time, which is a strong point in your favor. There are only 9 envelopes in your stack instead of ten, but no one will notice this. After collecting the envelopes, change the tray to your other hand, thus freeing the opening in the false bottom, and dump the trayful of envelopes into someone's lap. The extra No. 8 envelope falls with them.

Next comes the force of that added envelope with the question, the answer to which is on the slate being held. All suit coats are made with a small change pocket at the top of one or both of the side pockets. In the pocket proper put ten counters bearing the same number, in this instance 8. In the little pocket put ten counters numbered consecutively beginning at 1. It is from this little pocket that you take the counters which you hand someone and take back. You put them back into that little pocket, and shake the entire pocket as you hold it open for a selection. If the coat pockets have flaps, so much the better. Keep the flap open for the first showing and return. Then turn the flap inside and let the spectator reach freely. The little pocket is covered. Otherwise merely hold your hand there in an effort to keep the pocket open and make the spectator's task of reaching in easier.

The rest you know. Just remember that no matter what question you may use, keep it topical, be certain that the answer definitely fits the question so that no checkup with its writer is necessary, and keep the answer short so as to show up on the slate. When you apparently get an acknowledgment after the question first is read aloud, it's a lie—for you look around and then nod with a gesture at—the Lord only knows whom. No one else will know either, but you've made a subtle point.

THE 20th CENTURY SLATE TEST - JEAN HUGARD

Jean Hugard has a clever and subtle method of handling a flap in this effect and I know it will find favor with not a few club and close-up workers. All in all, the general effect has not been changed much insofar as a message or name still appears on the slate. Mr. Hugard's subtlety consists of making the conditions appear stricter by the application of a piece of newspaper cut to slate surface size. After showing the slates as usual and cleaning them, a piece of newsprint is stuck to one side of one slate by its corners with bits of wax.

Unbeknown to the audience there is a message already written on one slate, which has been covered by a duplicate piece of newspaper stuck to the slate, and this newspaper in turn has been covered with the usual flap. The paper the audience first sees is dutifully stuck to the flap and the two slates are placed together. Mr. Hugard gave me no definite excuse for the paper, but I suggest that patter be formed regarding the necessity of absolute darkness and suggesting further that failure has resulted at times when even the slate frames were not exactly true and even.

Concluding this bit of patter, the performer separates the slates again and has a spectator, who is later to open the slate, initial the paper with a crayon. Of course, he initials the piece of paper covering the message, the flap bearing the piece of paper which the audience has seen having been dropped to the other slate. The slates are placed together again with the message slate on top and they are held by the spectator until it is time for the climax. The performer again takes them and separates them, and discards the lower slate bearing the flap. The spectator identifies his markings on the top slate, removes the paper and finds the message. This leaves the slate and paper in the audience, and all evidence of trickery has been done away with very neatly.

THE SCHOOLBAG - PETER WARLOCK

Now for a slate effect in which two messages are obtained on one slate. The operator picks up a schoolbag, and opening it withdraws a number of books, a slate, a piece of chalk and a duster. The patter theme runs along the lines that

the schoolbag belonged to one little Willie, since departed, and how now, strange things happen inside the bag. Cleaning the slate the operator marks it on one side with a name or an initial.

Whilst this is going on the schoolbag can be examined by a member of the audience. Receiving the schoolbag again, the performer places the slate and piece of chalk inside it. The bag is then hung by its strap on the back of a chair. Advancing with the books, four or five in number, one is selected by a member of the audience. The selector of the book is then asked to open it to a page which is decided upon and to read aloud the first line on the page. However, in arriving at a page number, the performer has noted down several freely suggested numbers on a pad and totaled the column, arriving at 91. When this is handed to another spectator to check, he reminds the performer that a mistake has been made and that the total should be 94. It is page 94 then to which the book is opened and the line read.

The performer now calls upon little Willie to manifest himself by writing on the slate, in chalk, the line selected. The slate is withdrawn from the schoolbag and it is shown to contain the written line. However, the man with the book says it's not the correct line. "What a pity," says the performer, "he never could count. It's probably the line from some entirely different page; let's give him another chance." The slate is cleaned and replaced in the schoolbag. After the necessary interval it is withdrawn and the correct line found written on the slate.

A subtle point in this routine is that the first message to appear is really the first line of page 91. Acting on the suggestion proposed in your patter given above, the man with the book is sure to check page 91 after the effect is successfully concluded. He'll tell the others for certain thus adding a decided punch to the whole effect.

Although only an ordinary flap slate is used in the making of this effect, it will be noted that two messages are produced instead of the usual one; also that there is no doubt in the minds of the spectators that both the slate and the schoolbag are free from preparation, as both are passed into the hands of the audience at some time during the presentation.

Requirements: One schoolbag, scribbling pad, pencil, tray, dust cloth, a flap slate, a piece of chalk and a number of books, one of which you will force. In making the necessary preparation, write the first line of page 91 on one side of the slate. On the flap write the first line of page 94, and place the written side of the flap against the written side of the slate so that the slate now appears blank on both sides. The dust cloth is rolled into a ball and put in a corner of the bag. The slate and other articles are dumped into the bag and you're ready to present the effect.

Presentation: Introduce the bag and remove all the articles except the dusting cloth. Hand the bag to someone to examine and he'll bring out the cloth—thus subtly proving that there's nothing left in the bag. The books and the cloth are placed on the table or a chair while the slate and chalk are held. Asking for a name or someone's initials, you write this on the non-flap side of the slate. Take back the bag and replace the slate. Directly that it is inside, tilt the bag, causing the flap to fall out of the slate and against the side of the bag.

Now force the correct book from among five on the tray, using the usual equivoque. Pick up the scribbling pad and pass from one member of the audience to another, asking them to suggest numbers which you write down in a column. However, you mentally keep track of the total.

When it has reached the total of not less than eighty-five and not more than ninety, you thank them and start to total the column. In the course of doing so, you deliberately add the figure necessary to make the column total 94, but actually you put down 91. Hand the pad to the person with the book, or his neighbor, who will of course correct your addition. The assistant now look up the first line on page 94.

Remove the slate from the bag, leaving the flap behind. It is handed to the spectator ostensibly for him to read what is written, and also to allow him to handle the slate and convince himself that it is unprepared. The sentence proves to be the wrong one, so you pick up the duster and erase the writing and then replace the slate in the bag. This time you place it behind the flap, *i.e.*, so the blank side of the flap comes against the clean side of the slate.

When removing the slate the second time, the flap is removed with it, it being an easy matter to slip it into the slate frame and hold it in place as the fingers withdraw the slate. The correct line now appears to be written on the slate. Simultaneously with the withdrawal of the slate, the schoolbag is turned over with the other hand, allowing the chalk to drop to the floor, thus mutely calling attention to the fact that the bag is otherwise empty.

KNOCKOUT! - HENRY FETSCH

Effect: The performer chooses a prominent member of the audience and hands him a piece of chalk and a slate and stands him at one side of the stage, or across the room. The performer stands at the opposite side of the stage and also holds a slate and a piece of chalk. Four more volunteers are asked to stand at their seats in the audience.

The first volunteer is asked to concentrate upon his year of birth. The second thinks of the year in which his wife was born. The third person mentally selects any important year, in the last 20, during which an event of consequence has happened for him. To further vary the numbers selected, the fourth assistant thinks of the first four figures of his telephone number,

license number, Social Security Card, etc. After a bit of concentration, the performer writes upon his slate the total of these four mentally chosen numbers.

The four audience standees are now asked to call out their selected numbers, and the assistant on the stage writes them down in a column on the slate he holds. He is requested to add them and call aloud the total, and then show it to the audience. (You can invite members of the audience to take down the numbers and add them for a double check—and this is a very strong point.) The climax arrives when the performer shows his slate to contain the correct total of the four numbers!

Routine: There are points in this presentation that afford exceptional clearness and directness of action. Magicians, especially, expect trickery either in the adding operation or in the performer's handling of his slate and chalk. However, there is no evident trickery at any time, and all material is unprepared. After such a buildup, I can see some readers quitting when a plant is mentioned. I only hope they'll follow through and try it out. The plant is the fourth person to stand.

The selection of volunteers is made according to the following table:

1st—Between 25 to 30 years of age.

2nd—Between 25 to 30 years of age.

3rd—Any age.

4th—Is a stooge who knows the total to be reached; we shall say 7595.

INSTRUCTION TABLE

1st—Think of the year he or she was born.

2nd—Think of the year his wife or her husband was born.

3rd—Think of any year within the last 20, of importance to him or her.

4th—Think of the first four figures of license, telephone, etc. (???)

By following the above tables, the selected number will always fall within a certain range of years. See the first table in conjunction with the following.

1st—1906 to 1921

2nd—1906 to 1921—due to the fact that husband and wife ages are nearly alike, or within ten years' difference.

3rd—1924 to 1944

4th—The first two digits of your stooge's number to be called is 18.

He acquires the other two digits as follows. As each of the first three calls his number to be written down on stage, the stooge makes a mental addition of the last two digits only. He then subtracts this total from the last two digits in the prearranged number (95) and gets the last two digits of the number he is to call. He puts 18 in front of them, and calls out the four figure number.

The addition of the four sets of selected numbers now totals the prearranged total of 7595.

EXAMPLE

1st—1910	The stooge's thoughts—	1st—10	
2nd—1913		2nd—13	95
3rd—1924		3rd—24	47
4th—1848		—	—
—		47	48
7595—the prearranged total	18 before the 48 remainder—	1848	

This is one effect where a stooge is never suspected. The explanation to a prospective plant is simple and easily understood. Give it just one try.

A SLATE AND A NUMBER - ORVILLE MEYER

The subtlety used in this number divination feat is quite ingenious, and a perfect example of misdirection. The routine is simple, direct and convincing.

Effect: Three people write mentally selected numbers on a pad of paper. The performer has correctly prophesied the total on a slate, and although this effect is not new, the method is certainly a psychological improvement over others of the same nature.

Preparation: Use a small scratch pad about 2 by 3 inches. Take the backing off so either side may be used for writing. On one side, using two styles of writing, put any two two-figure numbers, for instance 34 and 86. I suggest using two numbers whose total ends in zero, as the total of these two figures must be kept in mind. For the above figures, you would remember 120.

Routine: Select a spectator on your left and have him think of a number from ten to one hundred. With pad and pencil in hand, as though you were about to jot it down, ask him to whisper his number to you. When he does so, start to write it down, then pause a moment, and state that before you start the test, you will write a prediction which will not be revealed until the test is finished. Write something on the slate, and put it writing side down in full view. Ask the first person to keep his number in mind for a minute while you go to a person on your right. Hand the pencil and pad to him (don't worry about the numbers on the bottom of the pad, as they never turn it over) and ask him to write a number of two digits. Another person near the center is asked to do the same.

Now return to the first person on your left, and as you approach him, the left hand at side turns the pad over, bringing the previously written numbers to the top. Ask the spectator if he is still thinking of his number . . . then have him write it below the two previously written numbers on the pad. For further identification have him initial the paper, tear it off and keep it. You pocket the pad.

As you walk away, stress what has been done. Three numbers were thought of, and you wrote on the slate before anything at all was written down. The spectator with sheet adds the numbers, and then stands and reads the total aloud. The slate is shown and the predicted sum is correct.

HOW? Because after the first spectator gave you his number, you remembered (?) to make the prediction on the slate, and this predicted total was his whispered number plus the total of the two already written by you on the underside of pad. Thus, with 34 and 86 you would have kept in mind 120. If the first spectator had whispered 24, the prophecy would have been 144.

I suggest taking the paper from the spectator after he has read the total, and show it to one or two people nearby. Then pocket it and reveal what is on the slate. This principle gets entirely away from the old 9 principle which many know, and the fact that the last writer keeps the paper and adds does away with any thought of exchange.

GHOST WRITER - R. M. JAMISON

With the routine employed in the following trick, the slates may be shown high up in front rather than to one side, and two successive messages can be obtained.

Effect: We say "effect" when in truth this is merely a description of that part of an effect in which you produce one or two spirit messages on two slates. However, the handling has some nice points as you will see. The performer shows two slates, the sides of which are numbers from 1 to 4. These are exhibited quite freely and are put together. When taken apart a few minutes later, the numbering is still intact, but each slate bears a message on its inner side.

For those who want to produce two messages, or one long message with half of it on each slate, or as Ted Annemann suggested—a message on one slate with an important detail missing, which is later found on the second slate, then we can recommend this routine.

Preparation: The numbers and messages are written with No. 98 Sanford White Ink, using a small camel's hair brush. The contrast and reading is better than with chalk. The writing may be washed off later if you want to change the messages for another trick. To arrange the slate set up, place Nos. 1 and 5 on one slate, and on the "1" side, one of the messages. With this

message face up, and the numbered end of the slate AWAY from you, place it on the table to your right.

The other slate is numbered 2 and 4 with the message on the "4" side. Pick up this second slate with the "2" side up and with the numbered end TOWARDS you and place it on the table at your left.

Now number your flap 1 and 4, but on OPPOSITE ends. Take the flap with the "1" side up and towards you, and place it on the slate to your right covering the message on the first slate. Now pick up the slate to your left and place it on the right slate. No. 2 side will now be on top.

Routine: Pick up the squared slates and hold them in front of your chest, with your hands at the sides, so that the No. 2 side will be facing audience, with the number at top. Slide the rear slate (the one nearest you) off to the right, holding the flap on its front with the right forefinger. Thus the audience sees one side of each slate numbered respectively, 1 and 2.

Put them back together and turn them over end for end. Separate them exactly as before, the flap having dropped to the new rear slate during the turn over, and show the audience the sides numbered 3 and 4. Nothing could be fairer! The audience has now seen all sides of the slates!



Lay the slates on the table, remembering which message you want first, so that you can have either the No. 2 or the No. 3 side uppermost. To reveal the message, pick up the slates together, slide off the top slate and show the message it contains. Let the under slate with the flap be seen carelessly as devoid of writing, and drop it on the table—flap side down—as you rub off the message on the slate you are holding. Do not, however, rub off the number. A damp cloth will clean the slate very nicely.

Pick up the second slate, leaving its flap on the table. Remember that this second slate contains a message on its lower face, so do not let the audience get a flash of it. Place it on the slate you have just cleaned. Give them to someone to hold, and when they are separated a second message appears! Everything may now be examined, as the numbering is correct as at first.

If you use Annemann's suggestion, do not erase the first slate whose message is minus some important detail. After showing the message, pick up the second slate (containing the missing detail), place it on top of the first slate and give them to someone to hold. When separated, the spirits are found to have added the missing details on the second slate!!! The effect is thus

brought to a surprise finish, and leaves the slates perfectly numbered and with writing on both.

THOUGHT RAYS - DR. L. E. DUNCANSON

Effect: In this very effective mystery simplicity reigns supreme. A slate and a piece of chalk are given to a spectator who faces the audience. The performer is isolated in any fair manner, preferably by turning his back and standing in a far corner. The spectator is requested to think of a word or name and write it on the slate. Secondly he is asked to think of a number and to write that also. Finally he thinks of some geometrical design and draws that, as well.

Everything he has put on the slate he now shows to the audience. The performer directs everything from where he is located, and makes it very obvious that it is impossible for him to receive any clue as to what had been written. Once everyone has seen what the assistant has written and drawn, he is asked to erase it, lay it on the table and resume his seat.

The performer picks up the slate and the chalk and, standing facing the audience, asks everyone to concentrate on the word that was written. Then he writes something on the slate. Anyone now calls the word on which they have all been concentrating, and the performer turns his slate around and shows that he has actually written that very same word.

Erasing this, they are all asked to concentrate on the number while the performer again writes. Someone else names the number, the performer turns his slate and he is right a second time. The number is erased and, while all think of the picture, the performer succeeds in duplicating it! The effect is presented simply as a case of "thought rays" emanating from a large group all thinking of the same subject.

Preparation: You use nothing but the slate, chalk and a piece of dry, soft cotton cloth for the erasing. But beforehand, there is a slight preparation. Clean the slate well with ammonia water and let it dry. This is to remove all traces of oil from the surface.

Take a piece of white chalk and let it soak in Three-And-One Oil, then dry the chalk so that it is not oily to the touch. Anything now written on the ammonia cleaned slate with this prepared chalk, and afterwards erased, will leave a very light oily line tracing on the slate. This can be read by you if the slate is tilted slightly at an angle under a light, yet the surface itself appears void of writing. **Routine:** The working now becomes clear when the effect is reread. I advise having the spectator stand where there isn't an overabundance of light but there need be little fear on this score. The effect

may be presented under the most trying conditions and will not be found wanting.*

FATAL NUMBER - HENRY CHRIST

Here's a slate effect that is considerably off the beaten path, so far as its impression on the audience is concerned.

Effect: The performer shows a large display board (it can be made to fit the suitcase, or fold to fit a briefcase) upon which can be seen a long list of Kings who, throughout history, have either been murdered or deposed (see illustration). It is shown that the fatal number 2 has been in evidence constantly and that around these rulers there existed something unknown, something far greater than mere coincidence can explain away.

Two slates and a packet of cards containing the names and countries of the 18 rulers are at hand. The slates are shown blank on all sides, secured together with two elastic bands, and two spectators each hold an end of them.

Two more spectators step forward and one mixes the packet of cards thoroughly. The other spectator stands beside the large display board (containing the list of 18 deposed rulers as illustrated here) and is told to start at the top and tap each name deliberately and slowly down the column, stopping wherever he may please (this is NOT a force). At the same time, the man with the shuffled packet of cards holds them face down and deals off a card each time the first man touches a name. He stops dealing when the man stops pointing. The name and country is read aloud. The second man turns over the last card he dealt and shows it. *It bears the same name and country!*



* Note by Annemann: Zancig Annemann:Zancig sold an effect like this for \$10 shortly before his death, but it was for two people. The medium was guarded while the items were being written on a blackboard. The performer secretly copied them

on a piece of chalk with flat sides, and substituted this for the piece in use. The medium on return used this written-on piece of chalk and thus secured the necessary information I'm not violating any confidence by revealing this because it has long been off the market, and besides it can be found on page 295 of Carrington's Carrington's "Physical Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," which was published first first in 1907. I think that Mr. Duncanson's method for one person is an ingenious improvement that really modernizes the entire effect.

The first coincidence having been proven, the performer has the card dealer turn over the next card and call it aloud. The performer takes back the two slates and shows the inside surface of one. On it is a large and heavy chalked signature of that ruler. Stating that he will go a bit further, the performer announces that he has not only secured the signature from a ghostly land, but has also managed to get a picture of the ruler as he is today. Turning the other slate, he shows a large chalked picture of a skull!

Requirements: Practically everything used is familiar. The two slates have a common and not too tight flap. The signature of, say the tenth king, Alexander, is written on one side of the flap. The skull is drawn on the inside of one slate. Cover with flap and mark the frame on other side so you know later which is which. Get blank playing cards from your dealer and make two sets of 18 cards each, according to the list of rulers and countries. Now make an extra card for the tenth name, Alexander II of Russia.

On the back of the display board is fastened a simple chair back servante used for cards and found in every magical catalogue. The small bag has just above it a clip in which is resting one of the 18 card packets, arranged from back to face EXACTLY the same as the list of names on the board from top to bottom. The board is placed in front of a chair, resting on the floor. The extra card is put in the performer's right trouser pocket. The other 18 card packet is setting on the table together with slates. Two elastic bands are at hand.

Routine: Attention is called to the list and the story told of the apparently gruesome curse. The two slates are shown casually, placed together and fastened with the two bands. Two people assist in holding them.

Two more spectators help. One is given the packet of cards to read a few aloud and shuffle well. The performer takes them back in his left hand as he asks the other person to stand near the board and touch the names. In explaining this part, the performer picks up the board with his left hand at top, thumb in front, and the packet of cards he holds goes out of sight for a second. It drops into the bag and the fingers grasp the substitute deck as the board is picked up and placed on the chair seat against the back. This switch to arranged deck is perfect and most natural.

The first man having been told how to point, the other is given back his deck. No matter where the first man stops in his pointing, the second man must be at the same name with his cards. As this is being done, secure the extra card from your pocket. When the man stops pointing, take the remaining cards from the second man while he turns over his last card dealt.

Add the force card to the top of this packet and, after this part of the effect, hand the packet back to him and ask that he turn over the next card and call it out.

Take back the two slates. Remove the bands and hold them flat with the marked side upward. Remove the lower slate (with flap) and show the correct signature. Lay aside, and talk for a moment about getting a picture of the ruler as he is today. Then you can freely turn the other slate up and show the skull!

FAMILIAR SPIRIT - KENT ARTHUR

This test is a prize example of audience befuddlement. There are performers who will take hold of an experiment of this sort and build it into a feature number.

Effect: The performer shows about 20 blank pieces of cardboard. Or he may use his own business cards for the purpose, as they are always left behind with the audience. The people present now call out two figure numbers and these are written upon the cards, a single two figured number to each card. As each card is so inscribed it is dropped into a bowl or hat and at the conclusion of the procedure any spectator gives the cards a violent mixing.

Now passing to two others of the company, the performer asks each to reach in and draw out a handful of the numbers. Those remaining are kept by the man who mixed the cards and passed the container. During this time the performer has not touched the container or had any part in the procedure after writing the cards when the numbers were called.

Standing for a moment before each spectator, the performer gazes into his eyes and then inscribes something on a small slate he carries. Each of the three spectators is now asked to add together all of the numbers he has in his possession. During this interval the performer is seen to be adding numbers on his slate. He finally puts down a total and erases the other inconsequential numbers on the slate. The slate is placed writing side down to one side and another picked up.

Each of the three persons now gives his total and these are openly written on the second slate for all to see. A line is drawn under them and these, in turn, are added and a total reached. The performer recalls that the numbers used have been selected by the spectators at the start, and that in all selections and adding, the procedures have been entirely under their own control.

Picking up his first slate the performer shows what he wrote at the beginning. *It is the same total arrived at by the spectators!*

Method: Little has to be said about the solution for it is really simple. The entire swindle, for it is but little more than that, lies in the cards written upon at the outset. Although the performer asks for two figure numbers called at random from 10 to 99, and then apparently writes each upon a card, he actually writes only HALF the numbers called. For example: The first number called is, say, 28. The performer writes this upon a card and drops it into the hat or bowl. When the second number is called *he completely disregards it*, and really writes that number which, when added to the number called before, will total 100, in this case 72. And so he proceeds through the cards, writing what the audience calls on the odd cards and then what will bring it to 100 on the evens.

Now it will be seen that although the cards be mixed eternally and added in any combination, the grand total of 20 cards will always be 1000. More than 20 or less than 20 cards will give proportionate grand totals, figuring 100 for each pair of two cards.

1000 would be a suspicious total, so to offset this defect the performer on the last card deliberately adds a number which would be more than 100, or less than 100. For instance the number called on the next to the last card might be 73. On the last card, instead of writing 27 as should be done (to make 100 total for the two cards), the performer could write 51, or 24 more than necessary. Now the grand total will be 1024 instead of an even 1000. By writing a number less than 27, the grand total would be correspondingly less than 1000.

An alternate and very easy way to accomplish this "different total" at each performance is to have an extra, or 21st, card. The performer follows the rules through the first 20, each pair totaling 100. On the last card he writes exactly what is called and that number itself, added to 1000, will be the grand total. This eliminates any figuring upon the performer's part. The audience automatically makes the grand total different each time merely by naming the last, or 21st, number.

Be sure to make a great show of mixing and the selection of the numbered cards. Keep away from the operations after the start so that it all appears more than fair. The audience gets tangled up in the simple solution, always looking for a complicated maze of formulae.

For the performer who is really a showman, this is a very worthwhile effect.

THE PSYCHIC SLATE - HERBERT HOOD

Effect: The performer puts a single slate and a pack of cards on the table. Before leaving the room he asks a spectator to shuffle the deck (all of this after he is out of sight, of course), cut it several times, and then put the

top card face down under the slate. The mystic returns when this has been done. He peers at the blank upper surface of the slate. He may state that he is going to prove that man can, with proper training, use his eyes and brain to surmount normally impassible barriers. He draws a picture of a card on the upper side of the slate. He steps away. His picture is seen and named. The slate is lifted and the card beneath turned over. It's the same one drawn by the performer!

Preparation: Use a marked deck and stack it in the Si Stebbins order or the "Eight-Kings" arrangement. Use a marked deck that will not take too much squinting to decipher the top card.

Routine: Step away and let someone give the deck a shuffle. As you get almost out of talking distance tell him to cut the pack a couple of times. Then he takes the top card and puts it under the slate. You return, pick up the piece of chalk on the table and concentrate. It is easy enough for you to see the top card of the deck laying close by, catch its identity, and count one back in the stack system. That gives you the name of the card under the slate. Why? And after the shuffle? Simply because a stacked deck can be hastily shuffled by anyone and still remain stacked in sections too many to mention. After this shuffle it is cut once or twice. The percentage is terrific in favor of the top two cards being mates. Therefore, when one is taken from the top and put under the slate, the next can tattle if you know how to read its marks.

It but remains for you to draw its picture on the slate—the card beneath, and, in the remote case of failure, just admit of a "fog" and try again, turning the slate over and having the deck cut again for another selection. It will be an event in your life when you must try the second time.

A THOUGHT OUT THOUGHT - HERBERT HOOD

Effect: The performer shuffles a deck before a volunteer and gives it to him for further mixing. He cuts, looks at the top card, and buries it in the center of the deck, or thereabouts. Next he is asked to fan the deck out and hold it with faces toward himself. All of this time has seen the performer at a far side of the room.

The performer now holds a slate and chalk. He attempts to get an impression, but is dissatisfied. He moves toward the spectator, asking him to hold the fan of cards up and directly before himself. The spectator is told to try and see his card among all of the others. The performer comes close and raises or lowers the spectator's arms to an eye level. Then he steps away and does another picture. The spectator names his card—and the slate is shown. It is pictured there.

Method: Again we have used a marked and stacked deck—and again we have presented the effect in such a manner as to deceive the most erudite. The first shuffle by the performer was false, a mere matter of cuts. The spectator's shuffle was slight—the performer didn't let much time elapse before telling the person to cut the deck, pick off the top card, look at it, and bury it.

The first bit of writing on the slate was fakery. Then the performer approached the spectator with his fan of cards. His maneuvers here amounted to nothing, except, he was able to see and read the identity of the top card of the deck—at his (performer's) right end of the fan. Counting one back he knew which card to draw actually on the second attempt.

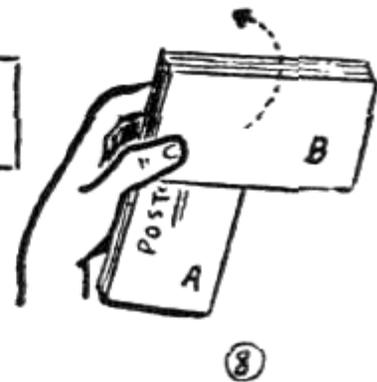
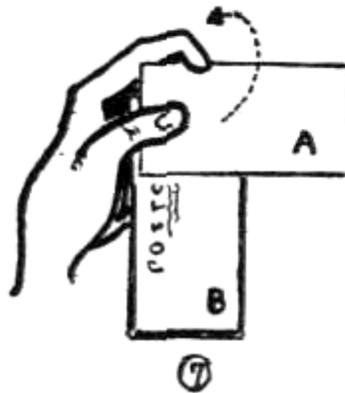
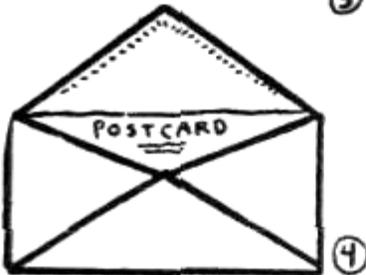
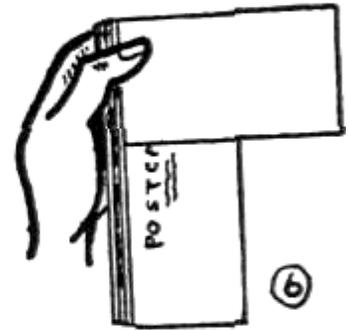
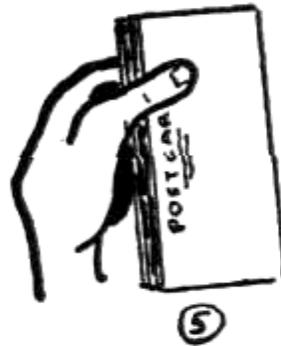
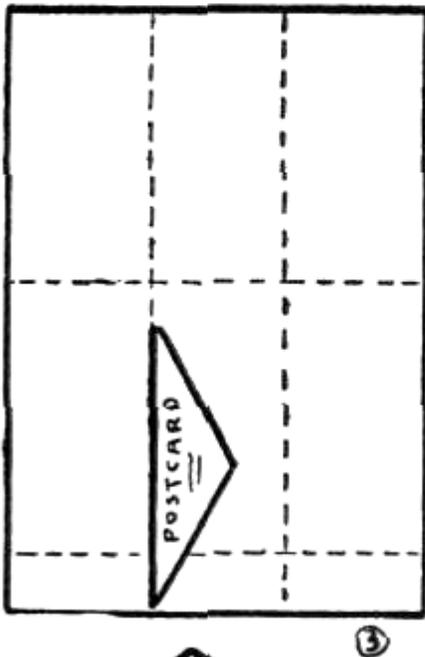
PSYCHIC TYPE - STANLEY COLLINS

Effect: This very effective experiment, built around the trick of a slate with a loose flap, offers sundry points of novelty. Two slates, after being marked on both sides with identifying numbers, are tied together with a piece of tape and entrusted to someone in the audience to hold. The titles of well-known magazines are called out by various spectators and written down in succession by the performer on plain postcards, each name being verified as it is written by a gentleman who stands at the performer's side. About half a dozen having been suggested, the cards are openly handed to the man on the stage to be shuffled, after which he is requested to retain any one of them and return the others to the performer. The selected card, the name upon which is only known to the helper, is placed by him in an envelope chosen from a packet and having been carefully sealed and marked is handed to the person holding the slates. Upon separating the slates a few seconds later, the selected name is discovered written in chalk upon one of them, while the envelope, bearing the initials of the second person, on being torn open reveals the title page of the selected magazine instead of the card.

Preparation: Despite precautions to eliminate forcing, one of the slates contains a previously chalked name of a popular periodical, certain to be called, on one side covered with a flap. The title sheet of this magazine is folded and put into an envelope after subjecting it to a little preparation. A triangular piece cut from the top of a postcard is pasted to the sheet's back, so that when it is inserted in the envelope the top edge of a postcard alone is visible, and the presence of the title is never suspected. The envelope containing this faked sheet is deposited on the top of the packet to be utilized for the experiment.

Now the postcards. Of these, a dozen will be required, five of which are prepared beforehand by writing on the blank side the name to be reproduced

between the slates. Place them on the table with printed sides up, and the seven unprepared cards on top of them.



Routine: Having numbered the slates, they are placed for a moment on the table while the tape is shown and when again picked up to be tied, the flap is allowed to remain behind. The next step is to write the called out names of the various journals, and it is at this part of the effect that a very subtle deception is employed.

Taking the dozen postcards from the table, the performer nonchalantly takes about half of them and hands them to the assistant for scrutiny. He hands them back and the performer puts them on top of the others which he holds in his left hand, as per Fig. 5. While asking for the first name, the top card is apparently taken in the right hand, turned over and placed on the stack as in Fig. 6, the bulk of the cards forming a pad to facilitate ease in writing. In reality, however, the TWO top cards are taken as one, turned over as described, and the first name is written as called out. Five other cards are added, one by one, each receiving a name given by members of the audience.

Now, while asking for the next name, a peculiar turn over is given to the two packets which should be readily understood by studying sketches 7 and 8. The two packets are caused to make a revolution by altering the positions of thumb and first finger, the former being passed below the packets and the latter above. A slight upward pressure of the thumb causes the revolution and leaves the packets to all intents and purposes the same as they were a second previously. The card A in Fig. 8 will now be the one that was behind the first one drawn, consequently a blank card, and it is quickly placed on B to hide from the assistant's view the name already written on it, and the remainder very deliberately placed on the table. It is advisable to have a friend call out the required name at this stage, *i.e.*, seventh, so that the last name may be verified as were the previous ones. Should, however, the name be called out earlier, it must be written down again instead of the last name called, care being taken that the gentleman does not see this. Having written on the last blank card, the packet is handed to the spectator to be shuffled, which, of course, does not affect the trick in the least, as all the six cards will have the same name written on them.

Having made his selection of a card, the gentleman takes one of the envelopes spread before him, and into this he places the postcard he has chosen. It is handed back to the performer and is promptly changed for the top envelope of the pack in the act of turning to put them on the table. Then, openly, the card seen in the envelope is sealed and the flap marked. When opening the envelope at the conclusion, care must be taken that the fake piece of card is not exposed as stuck to the rear of the title page.

MIXED MYSTERY - H. C. MOLE

Effect: Saying that he wishes to demonstrate an example of the ultimate in coincidence, the performer shows a glass bowl full of one-inch square cardboards, each bearing a letter of the alphabet. These may be shown freely as there is nothing wrong with them in any way. A spectator is asked to reach into the bowl and take there from a small handful (say, 7 or 8) of the letters.

These he drops into a letter envelope which is sealed and given to him to hold for the time being.

Next, on a pad, three spectators write rows of three figures each, one under the other. A fourth person adds up the columns while the performer returns to the front and picks up a newspaper which he gives someone close by. Then he takes a school slate, piece of chalk, and speaks to the man who has added the figures.

As this total of 4 figures is announced, the performer writes upon the slate (suppose 4382 to be the total) PAGE—4, COLUMN—3, LINE—8, WORD—2. Then, turning to the one holding the newspaper, the performer asks that he open the sheet to the fourth page. Next he is to pick out the third column. When this has been done he is requested to count down to the eighth line, and lastly count across that line to the second word. Then he is to draw a circle around that word which has been so fairly picked. The magician now shows his strange knowledge of coincidence by having the chosen letters called off by their selector. As they are named he writes them across the other side of the slate. But, instead of making a word as written, the letters could look like A H E T E R W. The performer blandly asks the man with the newspaper if that is the word at which he has been looking. It could be a typographical error, of course. The answer is "No."

The slate is turned over and a quick check through of the position numbers made. Everything is in order. The spectator names the word. The performer says that coincidence supplied the correct letters but they were read out in the wrong order. The man with the letters calls them through correctly. *Finally calling upon his powers as a magician, the performer turns the slate around to show that the letters have rearranged themselves and now correctly spell "Weather," the selected word!!*

Preparation: With such an effect at hand, probably most of the readers would find no difficulty in constructing a method. There really are three separate parts—the selection of the letters, the reaching of a desired total, and the transposition of letters written on the slate. Apparatus necessities are small.

Secure or make three sets of the alphabet on one-inch square cardboards. A pad of paper with no backing, a pencil, a slate with a loose flap and chalk, a newspaper, and a faked envelope complete the requisites.

Open the paper and locate a page numbered with a single digit, preferably 2, 3 or 4. This page must contain a column of reading matter which starts at the top with no headlines or other confusing data. Look for an expressive word (not "the," "and," "there," etc.) somewhere among the first nine lines. Then jot down your four figures which find this particular word as described in the effect. That's your total.

Next originate a three row three figured addition problem, that, when added up, will result in the desired total. Take the backless pad. Being careful not to tear off the sheets, copy this problem on the under side of both the top and bottom pages. Each line should appear in different handwriting. Do not draw any line underneath.

On one surface of the slate, write the word you have picked in large chalk letters. Cover this with the flap.

Pick out, from your bowl of letters, the ones which spell out the chosen word. Get two letter envelopes. Trim the ends and bottom of one which leaves only the front and flap together. Insert this inside the other envelope. Between the flaps drop the letters you have selected, separating and spreading them so as not to make the envelope noticeably bulky. Lastly seal the flaps together. A secret compartment has thus been made.

Routine: The first spectator makes his small grab from the bowl. From your inside pocket you remove the envelope. The letters are dropped in, you seal it and the spectator keeps the envelope for the time being. Taking the pad from the same pocket it is handed to someone for the writing of three figures. He passes it to another, and he does likewise. Taking the pad you start towards the front, tear off the back (unused) page and give it to someone for the adding. No matter which side the first person has started writing upon, the other side, when torn off and given a spectator, bears the desired problem. This subterfuge which gives freedom in handling is credited to Dave Allison.

During the addition process, the paper is given out and the slate, with flap, picked up. On its unprepared side is written the figures of the total together with the page, column, line, word designations. The man with the paper looks up the word and scores it.

The rest of this action must be followed closely, for soon an impression must be created that the performer is slightly bewildered. The magician lays down the slate, flap side UP, and steps to the man with the envelope. "Have you been guarding those letters you picked?" he asks. He takes the envelope, tears off the end, and dumps the contents into the spectator's hands. Of course, the envelope is pinched open to allow of only those letters in the rear compartment leaving. "Call them out to us," says the performer as he goes back to the front and picks up the slate. He has crumpled up and taken the envelope with him, dropping it on the table as the slate is retrieved.

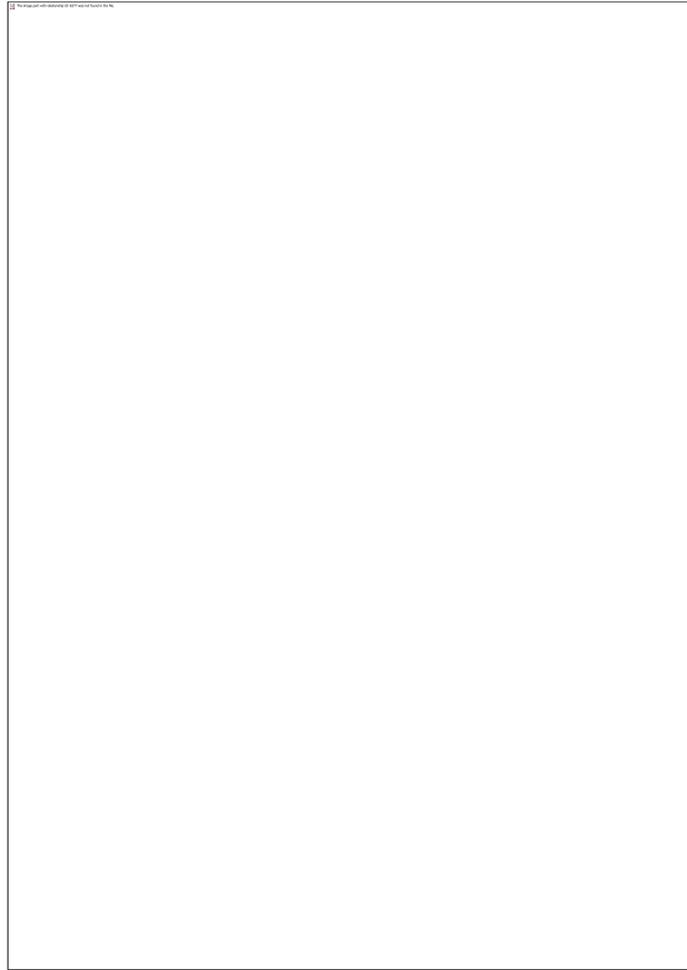
The letters as called out are written on the flap in their jumbled order. Almost always a few of the spectators, upon hearing the word called, will see that the letters are there though mixed. At this point you turn the slate over and ask the spectator if he has the right spot in the paper according to the figures. He says "Yes" and you lay down the slate again, but this time with flap side down, and approach him to get a quick glance at the word.

Light now seems to dawn and you explain that you had the letters but in the wrong sequence. Ask the man with the letters to stand and pick them out correctly, calling each one aloud. While he does this you reapproach the front, pick up the slate carelessly and appear to be checking the letters as named. The flap has been left behind. Next, and last, call upon the powers of darkness and evil to make good what they have made wrong. Then turn the slate to show the word in correct lettering.

More often than not the audience figures that the spectator with the letters has done his part wrong by his reading them off in an incorrect order. Then you apparently step into the breach and save the day by a bit of magical prowess in the rearrangement.

CHALK ON METAL SLATES TIP

Here's a worthwhile tip for those who have painted metal slates which are smooth and don't take chalk very well. Don't try sandpaper. Just put a spoonful of Dutch Cleanser or Babbo, etc., on the surface and then scour with a damp cloth. Paint will come off but it gives a new roughened side which takes chalk as it should be taken.



Shh! It's A Secret!

By
ANNEMANN.
ENGLISH EDITION.

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"DEMON SERIES"

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(Incorporating Maskelyne's Mysteries)
LONDON.

THE PERFECT CLUB SLATE ROUTINE.

This routine is one that I used as a feature for a long time. It is good anywhere but especially fine for clubs. I can't claim a thing about it except for the routine as the slate method was doped by Al Baker many years ago and the envelope idea has come from somewhere in the dark past also.

The performer has two slates, a small drug envelope and a blank card to fit same. The envelope is faked by cutting a window in the face side. A flap for the two slates is at hand and on one side of the flap are written two or three rows of mixed letters covering the whole side. This flap with writing side downward is on the edge of a table back where performer is standing. The two slates are otherwise unprepared and lying on top of the flap. Now that you have seen what is necessary read the effect.

The performer picks a prominent spectator and has him think of some close friend or relative who has passed into the great beyond. The party is asked to write the name on the card so as to prevent them from changing their mind during the test. The performer steps to the spectators with envelope (flap side up) and has the spectator insert his card with the writing side down. The performer seals the envelope with flap always toward party and then openly writes the spectator's initial very heavily across the flap. Walking back to front, the envelope is stood against something and left in full view for the time being.

Picking up the slates which may have been left with some other party to examine and clean the performer covers all four sides with mixed letters in order that that may be sent into the spirit to be used for a return message. The performer then erases all letters leaving all four sides absolutely clean. The slates are placed together and handed the spectator who is thinking of the dead name. Now the performer walks to table and picks up the envelope. He says, "Now, for the first time, we shall learn the identity of the person who has been thought of."

Tearing the envelope open, the card is removed and the name read aloud. The spectator acknowledges it and is asked to stand and open the slates. **THE DEAD NAME IS FOUND WRITTEN ON THE INSIDE, THE CARD IS RETURNED AND OF COURSE THERE IS NOTHING WRONG TO FIND.**

The reader naturally can figure from the effect the handling of the envelope. In placing it on the table the name is read by performer who then uses this knowledge in handling the slates. We shall call them f1 and f2 and advise following this description with slates in hand.

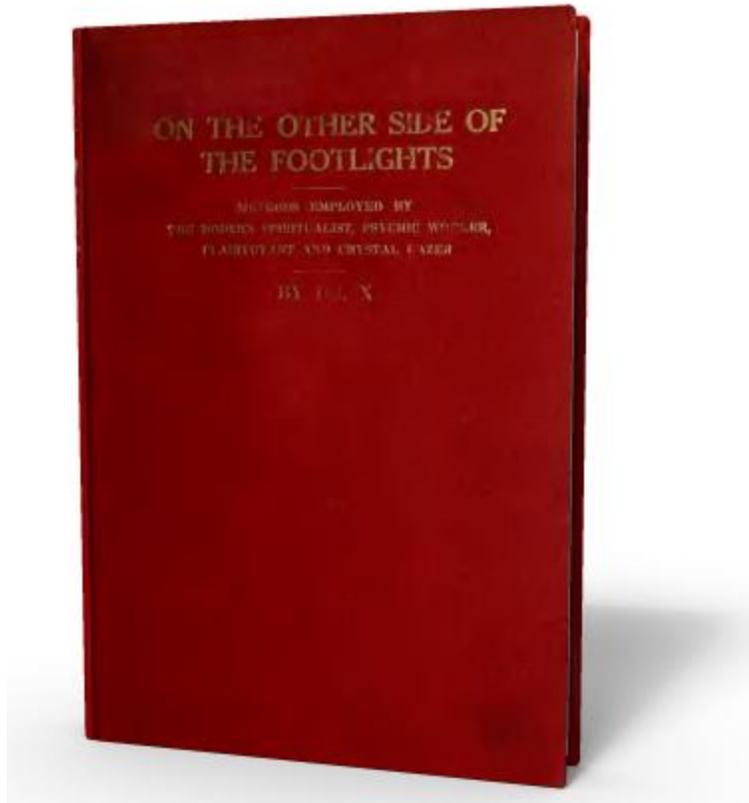
On slate f1 cover the side with mixed letters in any order. Turn slate over and apparently continue but on this side the dead name is actually printed instead. Put the letters down at random which will keep up the same impression as was given during the writing on the first side.

Without showing this side, lay the slate on the table OVER THE FLAP with the name side down, at the same time picking up slate f2. Fill both sides of this slate with mixed letters. Holding this slate in the left hand pick up slate f1 with the flap underneath and with a slate in each hand show them freely on both sides. The flap covers the name and both are seen to be completely covered with mixed letters.

Put the left hand slate f2 under the right arm and with pocket handkerchief or suitable cloth clean slate f1 on both sides. Lay it on the table with the flap side down and clean slate f2. Now pick up slate f1 from the table leaving the flap behind and lay it on slate f2, handing the two together to the spectator who wrote the name. On the inside of slates is now the dead name, although you started with perfectly clean slates and everything you have done has been perfectly fair, logical and above board.

Now open the envelope, read the name aloud, and pocket the torn envelope. The slates are opened' and the climax is thus reached.

I want everybody to at least try this out. I know it is good without question. The psychology of having the name sealed and revealed AFTER the slates are cleaned and in the audience. Apparently the performer never knows what the name is until the last and the revealing of the name and the climax with slates come all at once and in the correct sequence to build up the effect.



On The Other Side of the Footlights

By
DR. X

AN EXPOSE OF ROUTINES, APPARATUS AND
DECEPTIONS RESORTED TO BY MEDIUMS,
CLAIRVOYANTS, FORTUNE TELLERS
AND CRYSTAL GAZERS IN DELUDING
THE PUBLIC

Published by
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Berlin, Wis.

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Editor Note:

Only the routines having to do with slate work have been included. The complete volume is available online through public domain search.

It is the opinion of the editor, this book was either written or commissioned by Harry Houdini because of the following clues. The publishing date of 1922, Houdini was deep into exposing false spiritualists and mediums, the subject of the volume. The dedication to Harry Kellar, whom Houdini highly respected. And the “Dr. X” the writer used. Houdini loved this sort of thing.

FLAP SLATES:

Slates have always occupied a position of prominence in the repertoire of mediums, clairvoyant workers, magicians and crystal gazers, being used either for the asker to write his query upon, or as a means of communicating information from supposedly departed spirits.

The oldest and probably most used version was that whereby an ordinary school slate was fitted with a silica flap, matching the slate. Writing placed on slate beforehand and covered with this flap was invisible to audience, though both sides were unmistakably shown ; in some instances being wiped with a damp cloth or sponge.

After exhibition, the faked slate was set down for a moment on a table fitted with a dark drape or cover, allowing flap to drop thereon where it was invisible a few feet distant; a second slate proven devoid of writing was placed under the first one, it being necessary for medium to avoid exposing under side of slate when picking up from table.

The two now being together, with writing inside, were wrapped with a piece of cord, a stout rubber band or enclosed in newspaper and given to one of audience to hold; concentrating strongly upon the thought at hand for a minute or more, medium requested that slates be separated, exposing to view a message addressed to the writer, or one of general information.

MEDIUM'S SLATE MYSTERY:

For individual use, where medium came into possession of a sitter's information before he was ushered into his private reading room, the following was applied with telling effect: The chamber in which presented was never brilliantly lighted and aromatic incense burned in a vessel or miniature idol to disguise the odor of alcohol.

A thin solution of ordinary library paste was used to cover one side of slate and while still wet the message written thereon with an ordinary slate pencil and allowed to dry. When ready for demonstration slate was washed with a sponge dipped in alcohol, darkening writing so as to be invisible in the dimly lighted room ; lightly wiped with a towel it could be laid, writing side down, on table, or placed with another slate and given to sitter to hold between his hands; when dry the message was plainly visible. The use of water in lieu of alcohol would obliterate this message.

THE BOLTED SLATES:

Among more recent pieces of apparatus are the slates which may be passed for examination; a question is written on a slip of paper, placed between them and they are then bolted at the four corners, wax being used if desired to demonstrated that they have been unmolested. The slates may also be bound with twine and knots sealed.

When properly secured slates are placed in a cabinet and on completing whatever tests are to be utilized, they are once again passed for examination and everything found intact; the audience are allowed to separate and discover the slip of paper still in place, but one of these slates bears a message addressed to writer, giving a fairly intelligent answer to his or her query. The possibility of human aid in producing this message seems extremely remote and has convinced more than one doubting person that the writing is actually performed by an unseen spirit. For cabinet tests this piece of apparatus has no equal.

The slates resemble the ordinary school brand, with holes in each corner for insertion of bolts ; one is entirely unprepared but the second has at one end a bracket or hinged portion of braid, held in place by a small brad; upon removal of this brad, braid portion can be lifted up, thereby permitting of

the slate itself to extracted through this end; after reading slip with message inserted between slates an answer is written on the unprepared one, sliding section reinserted and brad pushed or driven into place, all this being accomplished without interference by the bolting and wrapping of slates, provided they have not been bound around their smaller ends.

The spectators take slates apart, and no matter how carefully examined evidence of trickery cannot be discovered about the one bearing a message, for it is, pure and simple, an article of ordinary design.

MECHANICAL SLATES:

Nothing ever produced for slate writing has equalled this truly wonderful piece of apparatus, which can be worked while surrounded on all sides, if occasion requires, but it is best to have your audience seated in front of you. It is further necessary that the information come into your possession beforehand, through any of the various explained modes of procedure.

The user introduces two ordinary looking slates, washing on all four sides and passing out for examination; collecting them from examiner's attention is called to the fact that slates never leaves spectator's view for one instant, precluding any possibility of substitution, and they are accordingly held above his head until desired position facing spectators is reached.

Again, unmistakably showing all four sides of slates, they are placed together, a piece of slate pencil inserted between and several people allowed to hold, depending upon individual taste. After proper concentration, the separation is done by members of audience, who find a message on both slates; closest scrutiny fails to bring to light evidence of trickery or preparation, so far as the slates themselves are concerned.

Utmost care is necessary in the construction of this piece of apparatus, which is really a version of the old flap slate, but in this instance apparatus is practically "fool proof" and will stand scrutiny of the most observing skeptic; even if told the secret it would require some time to actually operate. The wooden edges of slate, around which the brade is fastened, are wider than in an ordinary school slate, giving the appearance of a more expensive article ; these four edges are about 1-inch wide and one end of each slate can be pulled back a fraction of an inch into border portion, but a strong spring makes this action difficult unless it is properly grasped; as soon as released the spring carries edge portion back into place.

A flap made of the same grade material as used in the two slates is provided, being of the identical width and slightly longer, so as to fit in place underneath movable sides; it is made an exact fit and minute inspection will fail to disclose its presence. When the two are placed together this flap is on uppermost slate, facing the second one ; a strong pull on edge of upper slate causes it to drop onto lower and in moving from one side to the other a grasp

is obtained on lower slate, end pulled back and released, fastening the flap in place. Performer takes slates slightly apart to insert stub of pencil, at the same time making sure that this flap is in correct position.

By writing a message on the one covered with flap and on the inner side of this same flap, when lowered on to bottom slate it exposes a message written on both.

This article can be used in conjunction with various tests and defies detection.

HINGED FLAP SLATE:

In order to dispense with writing on pads, etc., in this version a slate is used, which remains in possession of the sitter throughout, and will puzzle even the intelligent as to how the Information came into medium's possession.

It is not suitable for stage use but a valuable asset in private readings, where but one person is present at a time. Entering medium's office there will be noticed on his table several ordinary articles, including three slates. You will be requested to write your name, the name of some departed friend or relative and what is uppermost in your mind at the time being, during which medium will repair to another part of the room, out of range, precluding any theory to the effect that he could possibly know what was being written on slate.

Upon completion of your inquiries it was requested that you place this written on slate face down upon the one lying beside you; the medium took his place opposite, placing the third one on top of the others and asking that you write thereon the initials of this departed friend.

At conclusion of these various proceedings medium lifted all three slates to an angle of about 45 degrees, requesting that you gaze upon the initials just written, also concentrate strongly upon the advice sought; after a minute or two had elapsed slates were laid to one side and information imparted that conditions were now suitable; the presence of a spirit from the other world being felt.

You were informed that a certain party (the name of the deceased friend written on slate) desired to speak to you through intercession of medium ; your correct name was given, and after holding your hand or hands for two or three minutes, an answer and some advice was forthcoming to fit that previously written on the slate. It is small wonder that many persons have been made the dupes of fraudulent clairvoyants and others ; these transactions and results produced seem beyond the power of mortal man, and that spiritual intercession was invoke would be a natural conclusion ; everything transpired in your immediate vicinity, precluding the possibility of trickery, substitution of slates, etc.

The slate given you for writing upon was very ordinary, so was the third slate, carelessly placed a trifle beyond your reach, but the second one, upon

which you deposited that bearing a message, contains a solution of this mystery, for far from being supernatural it was a clever piece of apparatus, enabling medium to obtain possession of what had been written.

This mechanical slate was in reality a hinged one, the hinges being concealed in lower frame ; pulling up on the opposite edge released entire slate portion, permitting it to fall against table and leaving a clear view of writing on second slate.

In operation, after you had deposited message bearing slate face down upon mechanical one, medium placed the third ordinary article on top of all, and on this was written the initials. Holding slates at an angle for your intent gaze was merely a ruse, enabling medium to release slate portion of bottom one, being concealed behind the others and not visible to you; while concentrating he in turn was memorizing names and questions written, and the finish hardly needs an explanation—just close flap by allowing slates to rest flat on table, discard to one side, and answer according to how the party "sized up."

WEDGE AND STEEL HOOK:

Before introduction of the mechanical bolted slates, two ordinary articles were used (your own if furnished), tightly bound together and knots sealed, nevertheless a brief message was found after exit from cabinet.

To secure writing upon slates medium took a small hardwood wedge, forcing them slightly apart despite bindings; a thin steel rod with a minute piece of slate pencil secured to its end was inserted between slates and the writing accomplished in this manner—a crude comparison to the modern devices used for such demonstrations.

SLATE SWITCHES:

In clairvoyance and medium readings prepared articles are not always employed, but slates switched for duplicates through many ruses, such as using a holder on bottom of table, a shelf under seat of chair, switched through curtains while held overhead—an assistant back of a curtain placing down a duplicate set and bringing away the desired ones; this being above the sitter's range of vision; panels in wall have been used and artifices too numerous to mention, in these modern days having been supplanted almost entirely by mechanical means.

One still in vogue and often employed by the faker was to have seven or eight slates piled upon his table with a slightly larger one nearby; these were all washed and examined and in the event of placing your message on a slate,

which was laid on top of pile, face down, medium covered with larger one and later carried it away with your message-bearing one concealed underneath. After obtaining desired information it was in the same manner replaced.

In having a previous knowledge of your query, this same system was used to introduce a written on slate concealed at the start underneath the larger. All these exchanges, switches, etc., depended to a great extent upon the systems known to each faker, and the degree of dexterity possessed.

SLATE SECRETS

(S E A L E D)

Compiled by

D. J. LONERGAN

Containing: Routines, Methods, Chemical Formulas, Subterfuges, Etc.,

For most of the late Slate Effects now on the Market.....

Price \$2.00

Professional Treatise.

Published by

THE MAGIC MANUSCRIPT COMPANY.

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Chicago. 111.

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"SLATE— SECRETS"

INTRODUCTION.

Custom demands an Introductory. This one will be concise. The appearance of this work will be severely censured and damned by a large number of the Dealers and the "Fraternity". The reasons will be twofold. This Manuscript will "kill" most of the future sales of certain "VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION TRICKS" that are now sold for \$5.00 and \$10.00 each. Secondly, these cheaply prepared Manuscripts are ever a target for the "Magic Critic" and Reviewer" to vent their spleen upon. This one SHOULD be no exception! But, for the benefit of those, the 'elite,*who dot and smear the escutcheon of Magic, let us warn you that the Compiler is no Grammarian. The text to follow will contain colloquial usages. Grammatical errors will abound! We had but one thing in mind when we started this work. That was to be efficient, to give the information to be imparted to. the Reader, in as compact a form as possible.

The Writer forecasts that the time will come when the "secret" of an effect will be revealed to the prospective purchaser, before his purchase, enabling him to know if it will be of use to his particular type of work. Information of the nature exposed in this work is useful only if "used "Give two Magicians a set of "secrets", and one will immediately begin to use its subject matter while the other one will shelve it in "that Collection.

We have not attempted to "Give Credit where Credit is due". The Effects listed herein are really all from the basic idea, i.e; "TO PRODUCE SPIRIT WRITING----VISIBLE-----INVISIBLE-----ETC-----". We do say however, that a great deal of time and study was put forth to perfect the formulae of some of the VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHODS,(Many of which have never been sold before, because, for one reason, they are new!)

As these Effects are still selling at fabulous prices at some dealers, who chisel a more or less precarious livelihood from the sale of Magical Paraphernalia, the purchaser of this Manuscript may feel himself compensated in this respect alone, as a perusal will enlighten him as to the possibility of their use in his program, without further expense upon his part.

We are all familiar with the lasting popularity of Slate Tricks. It has been the dream of every Magician and Medium to produce writing upon an ordinary Silicate Slate that would appear slowly RIGHT BEFORE THE SPECTATORS EYES, seemingly written by an INVISIBLE or UNSEEN HAND.

This Effect has been perfected and is presented for your benefit in the VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHODS chapter elsewhere in this book. In closing, let us say that we predict a large sale for this little work. Its unreserved scope will fall a long felt want in the hearts of lovers of Slate Tricks. May we be excused for the repetition of that time worn phrase,

“-the hope that you may derive as much pleasure and knowledge from the reading of this Work, as the Compiler did in preparing it for you”.

D.J. LONERGAN.

SLATE--SECRETS CHEMICAL SLATE TRICKS.

In presenting this complete and practical treatise of Slate Trick," we are adding this Chapter on Chemical Slate Effects. Most of these recent are however, more or less OBSOLETE. The following ones are, in the Writers estimation, the "Cream "of this type of work; and will afford the Fan an evening of pleasant experimentation.

CAUSTIC PENCIL METHOD.

This is one of the very oldest of Spirit Writing Methods. It was in use twenty-five years ago to the writers knowledge. It has one disadvantage, the Slate used in the trick can be used but once.

Procure a cheap Slate (5 cent variety) and write your book test answer or message upon it, (Using a CAUSTIC or SILVER NITRATE pencil). This may be purchased at any Drug Store for about 15¢. Be sure to get SILVER NITRATE. This pencil will last for many performances.

The Message is written upon the Slate just as you would write it with an ordinary slate pencil. When the complete message is written it can be made to disappear by BREATHING- upon the Slate. Upon your table you should have a glass dish containing a weak salt-water solution and a sponge. Wash Slates upon both sides with this. (When both sides of the slates are wet with the solution--they may be freely shown-- without danger of message being seen).

Place Slater-Writing side away from your Spectator— and proceed with your book test. The Slate will DRY in a very few seconds and may then be handed to your Spectator. The Writing will appear as if written with an ordinary slate pencil.(The Salt-water solution having converted the nitrate of silver into chloride of silver which is a white or grey precipitate— closely resembling slate pencil writing). As this message is really ETCHED into Slate, the reason for the use of CHEAP SLATES is apparent.

LIBRARY PASTE METHOD.

Make a weak dilution of LIBRARY PASTE in water. With a fine Camelhair brush cover one side of the slate with this solution. While slate IS STILL WET write your message upon it with an ordinary slate-pencil. This paste solution will "FIX" it to the slate. When exhibiting Slate wash it with a sponge dipped in alcohol, and it may be freely shown (while wet) in an ordinary dim lighted Séance Room. Dry it lightly and tie it up with an unprepared slate. Opened a minute later message will be developed. The burning of Incense will prevent alcohol odor being detected, if performed in a small Séance Room.

ANOTHER CHEMICAL SLATE EFFECT.

This is one of the best of the older types of Chemical Tricks. It has many distinct advantages. The Slates may be left in full view upon the table before the trick. They may be shown, when dry, to be CLEAN on all sides. They are washed with a damp cloth, and again shown to be PERFECTLY "CLEAN. They may now be held or tied together, and after the usual Book test, opened and found to contain the ANSWER apparently written IN CLEAR WHITE CHALK, instead of faint slate-pencil writing produced by most of the CHEMICAL METHODS.

The method and requites arc both very simple. THE ONE THING- TO BEAR IN MIND IS THAT **THE CHEMICALS ARE POISON!!!!** The writing is done with a fine camel-hair brush dipped into SULPHURIC ACID (**POISON**).

This writing will be INVISIBLE and the Slates may be shown and handled with ease. THEY CAN BE BRUSHED OFF WITH A DRY CLOTH. Now, the damp cloth is APPARENTLY wet with water--but it is actually WET with a solution of SUB-ACETATE of LEAD (**POISON**). The Slates are washed with this SOLUTION. When they are dry your MESSAGE will appear IN CHALK WHITE WRITING.

SLATE MANIPULATION! (NO FLAPS)

Below/ we describe a series of moves and manipulations that will be new to most Magicians.

Two UNPREPARED SLATES are ACTUALLY shown (APPARENTLY) on all sides and yet the SPIRIT MESSAGE is PRODUCED without the aid of FLAPS or FEKES!

To make these moves clear to the student without the use of Illustrations, we suggest that you number your pair of Slates on all four sides, i.e., Numbers:ONE, TWO, THREE, and FOUR. (These numbers may be written in small figures upon the wooden rims of your slates in the extreme RIGHT HAND CORNER). Naturally, these numbers are NOT used in the ACTUAL PRESENTATION of this Effect.

Stack the Slates together, having on the top the Slate marked ONE and TWO, (Being sure to have the number TWO side on the BOTTOM). Now, the BOTTOM SLATE, (having the numbers THREE and FOUR on it) Is placed so that the number FOUR side is at the bottom. This will give you the numbers stacked in consecutive order; ONE, TWO, THREE, and FOUR--from the top to the bottom when the Slates are STACKED or PLACED TOGETHER.

The WRITING that you wish to MATERIALIZE is written upon the side of the Slate that we have marked number TWO on its border RIM. After you have written your message on the number TWO side you are now ready to

proceed with the trick. First, show to your Audience the sides of the Slates numbered ONE and FOUR.(HOLDING THE TWO SLATES TOGETHER SO THAT THE MESSAGE ON THE NUMBER TWO SIDE— WILL NOT BE EXPOSED— AS IT WILL BE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TWO STACKED SLATES BEING FLUSH WITH- THE NUMBER THREE SIDE.)

Now place the top slate on the bottom,(which will bring number THREE on top.— Number FOUR and Number ONE in the middle— and number TWO (the side with your message on it)at the bottom.

Casually show the top slate, which is number THREE, and open the two slates OUTWARD; (BOOK-FASHION) which will expose the number ONE and FOUR sides of the slates. Now place the Slates so that number ONE will again be on top, and number three on the bottom. Now SHOW THE TOP AND BOTTOM of the slates as they are hold together, that is numbers ONE and THREE. It will now appear to the Audience that they have SEEN ALL FOUR SIDES OF THE SLATES, but in reality they have missed the MESSAGE side, Number— "TWO".

You now have the Slates bound or tied and you are ready to proceed with the balance of the Effect.

After a little practise you will make those moves in a natural manner,and very quickly,without a seconds hesitation . You will find upon perfecting this routine that you are in possession of a series of moves that will fool many a Medium and Magician.

The ILLUSION created is PERFECT. The ONLOOKER actually THINKS that all sides of the Slates wore EXHIBITED, The Writer saw THE GREAT BLACKSTONE do these same moves at one of his famous SPOOK NITE SHOWS. IT WAS ACTUALLY A MIRACLE in this Magicians hands!

VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION AND INVISIBLE SPIRIT WRITING METHODS. PREAMBLE.

VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHODS of Slate Writing have enjoyed a large sale among the Magic Dealers, and an immense popularity with the Magicians the past year. These Methods are the ones that ALL Magicians and Pseudo-Mediums have been hoping for--- for years--but thought impossible to do.

Doing away with all mechanical means and processes, fakes and Flaps, as it does, it is no doubt the greatest single advancement in this particular line of effects that Magicians have yet encountered. Nothing, (apparently) but an ordinary Slate is used. The fact that the MESSAGE is developed" in REAL SHARP CHALK WRITING--(That is actually Chalk)— and that the Spectator may WASH away the MESSAGE at the conclusion of the trick, is also an added feature. Spectator may EVEN keep the Slate as a Souvenir, as NO AMOUNT OF ANALYSIS WILL REVEAL THE CHEMICAL SECRET.

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VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHOD NUMBER ONE.

EFFECT: Slate is cleaned with a sponge-- and shown REPEATEDLY ON BOTH SIDES. It is then placed upon a stand-rack in full view of the Audience. The usual BOOK, DICTIONARY, OR FIGURE ADDITION TEST is made. A Spectator is now asked to go to the Slate, (Performer does not need to go near it) and Spectator upon turning Slate around finds the MESSAGE, WORD, OR TOTAL, in CLEAR SNOW-WHITE CHALK. The Slates may now be examined most MINUTELY

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VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHOD NUMBER TWO.

EFFECT: In this effect TWO Slates may be used, and Message produced on one side--- or on TWO sides---or THREE sides---or on all FOUR SIDES. This is possible with method number two, and is offered for THE FIRST TIME IN MAGIC to the Writers knowledge. The Messages may be produced one at a time, or all together. In this method the Slates are covered with a BORROWED HANDKERCHIEF.

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INVISIBLE SPIRIT HAND METHOD NUMBER THREE

EFFECT: An ORDINARY SLATE or SILICATE SLATE is exhibited. This is now thoroughly cleaned with a moistened sponge. A short Question, . is now addresses to the SPIRIT-WORLD, such as: Do the Dead 'Return?--- This question is written across the TOP of the Slate in PLAIN WHITE CHALK, or the Spectators INITIALS may be written there instead for later

IDENTIFICATION. Slate is now placed upon Stank-rack on your table, or suspended by ribbons across the Stage.

PERFORMER now "CALLS "for message to appear from "SPIRIT-WORLD" „ SLOWLY, while entire Audience is looking at the Slate, A SPIRIT MESSAGE VISIBLY— LINE-BY-LINE— APPEARS, WRITTEN RIGHT under the QUESTION or the INITIALS that were always VISIBLE at the top of the Slate.

THIS MESSAGE APPEARS IN PURE WHITE CHALK. The Slate may now be passed to Audience with a dish of CLEAR WATER and a SPONGE----and BOTH message and question or initials may be washed off, TO PROVE MESSAGE WAS NOT ETCHED OR PAINTED UPON THE SLATE.

REQUISTTES AND CHEMICALS FOR MATERIALIZATION METHODS. SPECIAL DESIGNED SLATES.

Slates with wooden RIMS may be used in these experiments, but they are inferior for this type of work. The wooden rims retain the chemical odor of the BLOCK OUT LIQUIDS, and make the entire test obviously just a CHEMICAL TRICK.

The type of STRAW-BOARD SLATE described below, are easy to make, and are IDEAL for all methods of VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION.

Procure a large sheet of STRAW-BOARD from a Book-binder Supply House. Give this board THREE COATS of "BLACKBOARD SLATE PAINT" (This paint is obtainable at all SIGN PAINTER SUPPLY STORES). Cut this painted board,(after a through DRYING into sizes of 10 X 13 inches. These Slates will be found to be suitable for all of the VISIBLE and INVISIBLE methods. They are porous, and absorb and retain the BLOCK-OUT LIQUIDS perfectly.

FORMULAE FOR BLOCK OUT LIQUIDS.

LIQUIDS "A"Mucilage.. .one part. Alcohol....one part.

LIQUID "B".....BENZOLE.C.P. (Chemical Pure) or Naptha.

LIQUID "C".....CARBON TETRACHLORIDE. C.P.

SPECIAL GRADES OF CHALK FOR METHODS.

There are two grades of Chalk used in the VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHODS. ALL MESSAGES~ARE WRITTEN WITH THE SOFT CHALK KNOWN AS: "ATLANTIC WHITE" Brand or "KROMA #53" made by AMERICAN CRAYON CO. The HARD CHALK is known as the "DUSTLESS-TYPE.!' This hard dustless type is used in the last method for writing QUESTION or INITIALS on Slate only!

MESSAGE WRITING BEFORE PRESENTATION METHOD

First, sharpen to as fine a point as possible, the soft chalk.... Prepare about ten sticks-- Dip a piece of this chalk into solution "A". Let the chalk SOAK UP WELL in this liquid...Remove chalk from the liquid and shake off excess fluid. Start writing your MESSAGE upon the Strawboard Slate. WRITE VERY LIGHTLY (You will "find that the writing is scarcely visible, due to the chemical combination "A" rendering the chalk almost INVISIBLE). You may disregard this, as WRITING WILL TURN SNOW-WHITE UPON DRYING. DIP CHALK into the "A" solution every three or four words-- NOTE! --As the SOFT FINE POINT of the chalk wears down---- that is--as the WRITING becomes thick or broad, discard chalk and use a new fine pointed one dipped, of course, in the "A" solution. Upon completing MESSAGE let it DRY for 10 or 15 minutes if possible. Your MESSAGE will now appear CLEAR and WHITE; just as any other chalk would appear, (except that the writing is very THIN and FINE LINED--). ALWAYS BEAR THIS IN MIND-- WRITE LIGHTLY-- KEEPING THE WRITING THIN AND FINE LINED--.

Much of the SUCCESS OF THESE METHODS ARE DO TO THIS FACT,AS MESSAGES WILL DEVELOP AND BLOCK-OUT QUICKER when the above is adhered to.

NOW, while this MESSAGE LOOKS like ORDINARY CHALK, a peculiar thing will be noticed here. If you rub the MESSAGE LIGHTLY with your fingertips, it will be seen THAT THE MESSAGE WILL NOT ERASE OR RUB OFF AS REGULAR OR ORDINARY CHALK WRITING WOULD. ALSO, it will not WASH OFF, with a sponge soaked in solutions, "B"--(with which you will later wash the slates, but upon washing with above, MESSAGE MERELY DISAPPEARS! The solution "A", performing the function of BINDING or HOLDING the MESSAGE INTACT to *the* Slate when it is lightly rubbed over with a sponge soaked in the "B" solution.

PREPARATION BEFORE PRESENTATION METHOD ONE.

Upon your table have a large bowl,(Brass or Cellini ware—). Bowl should be about six inches deep and ten to twelve inches in diameter. Into this large bowl place two small glass cups, such as used in Offices to hold moistening sponges etc. Fill one of these cups with PLAIN WATER. Into this place a small wad of cotton or a small silk sponge. Into the second cup place wad of cotton or silk sponge (silk sponges are much better) and fill this cup with the liquid "3".

Now take your Strawboard Slate(which has our message written upon it with the soft chalk and "fixed "to the Slate with the liquid "A"). Flow a quantity of liquid "B" over the slate,-- (writing will DISAPPEAR at once).

The SOFT,POROUS, NATURE OF THE SLATEs will retain the liquid for a minute or more, thus keeping the MESSAGE "BLOCKED-OUT or BLANK".

NOW!-- LIGHTLY wipe the wet surface of the slate with your sponge dipped in the liquid " B '— This WILL REMOVE the "WET"-- "SHINS" LOOK. Do not RUB too hard! Brush your sponge very LIGHTLY over the surface. You are now ready for the:

PRESENTATION

Bring table as arranged as above into the room,(or you may have the bowl prepared as above— and have assistant bring the "treated" slate to you. Slate may be freely shown to your Audience, as it is now-(to all appearances blank) REMEMBER, however,which side DOES have the now INVISIBLE writing upon it.

Place your hand into the bowl, and REMOVE FROM IT the sponge OUT OF THE SHALL CUP CONTAINING WATER. Wash the side of the slate that is actually BLANK, (The one that has NO MESSAGE PREPARED ON IT). Wash this thoroughly with this water-soaked silk sponge,,NOW, REPLACE the WATER SPONGE INTO THE BOWL-----and with one movement---PICK UP YOUR OTHER SPONGE SOAKED IN THE LIQUID "B"-- (make this exchange APPEAR as if you were MERELY RE-WETTING your first sponge). NOW, turn your slate OVER (Blocked-out writing side toward you)--and SQUEEZE or FLOW the liquid from the sponge all over the surface of the slate. This will cause any WRITING that may have "DEVELOPED" to again disappear.

LIGHTLY brush over this surface as if you were INTENT upon giving it a THROUGH CLEANSING.

Slate may now be shown again ON BOTH SIDES. After this "CLEANSING" place the slate where ever designated by the Audience (Writing side AYWAY from them ALWAYS!). If you use two slates, wash the second slate with the WATER SPONGE and place the prepared slate upon the first one~-writing to the INSIDE~-Place a piece of Chalk between them, and bind slates with a stout rubber band.---CHALK BETWEEN THE SLATES ALLOWYS AIR TO ENTER THUS DRYING SLATES AND DEVELOPING "MESSAGE". After the usual "tests" the slates are opened or turned around as the case may be, and MESSAGE is found to be written IN CLEAR WHITE CHALK.

While the Audience is inspecting the writing, give a Spectator the water-sponge and instruct him to wash away the message— to prove— THAT IT IS NOT ETCHED THERE WITH ACIDS ETC.

ADDITIONAL HINTS!

You may find that the message will develop too fast for proper presentation and examination. This will be true if your "B" liquid is the BENZOLE. If you use NAPHTHA for your "B" liquid you will find your development a little slower. As NAPHTHA evaporates much slower than the BENZOLE. NAPHTHA, however, gives off a stronger odor than Benzole, and is not as suitable for Parlor Work. **SUGGESTION:** If your table top is covered with a flowered cretonne cloth, the following hint is a solution for the "too fast developer" defect. Soak a piece of cloth of the same material as your table top cover, with the liquid Benzole "B". Fold this cloth to just the size of your slate. Lay this cloth upon your table-top---taking care to arrange the design of the folded cloth to match the pattern upon the table-top. This will be scarcely PERCEPTIBLE at a short distance. If the slate is placed on this moistened PAD,(writing side down) and a little pressure is used when placing slate upon it, WRITING WILL DISAPPEAR and REMAIN INVISIBLE as long as it is left in contact with the wet pad. This method is a fine one for the Performer who lacks an Assistant.

ANOTHER METHOD:

If you use the stone slates with the wooden rims, in place of the recommended Straw-board ones, this is the method to use: Get a SILICATE FLAP to fit the Stone Slate you are to use. Upon one side of this FLAP, glue several LAYERS of absorbent tissue paper-- the kind known and advertised for the removal of cold creams is perfect for this work, i.e., "KLEENIX" ETC.

Trim off any overlapping edges, and your FLAP will consist of one Slate side and one side having a heavy layer of tissue glued to it. Write MESSAGE upon Stone-slate with the soft chalk soaked in the "A" solution the same way as described elsewhere in this work. WET THE TISSUE SIDE of the FLAP with the liquid "B", 1 and place it, tissue side down upon the message side of the stone slate. Now to all appearances you show AN ORDINARY STONE SLATE (a la old style FLAP). In the act of "washing" this slate the flap is left upon your table top, and the slate is placed upon your stand-rack for "development". You will have just time enough to "flash" the blocked-out message side to your Audience as the message will show up upon the stone about 5 times as fast as on the Straw-board; due to the fact that none of the Block-out liquid is retained by the stone or silicate slate.

VISIBLE MATERIALIZATION METHOD NUMBER TWO.

This Effect is merely an elaboration of the number one method. As there is ACTUALLY no "force" of the side of the slate that the message is to appear upon, it becomes worthy of mention here. Two Straw-board Slates are used. They are numbered, 1²-3-and 4 respectively. The numbers

should be painted upon the slates in the upper left hand corners, Large numerals in any bright color are suggested.

NOTE: The message to be produced is written upon ALL FOUR SIDES OF THE SLATES! The Messages are fixed to the slates just as in the number one method. The Performer now asks the Audience what numbered side of the four sides of the slates the want the "message" to appear upon. After the selection of a side is made proceed as follows: If number one side is selected— wash the number one side with your sponge soaked in liquid "B", (This causes the message to vanish from the selected side— which you now freely show)

Now, while you are showing the now INVISIBLE message side number one, EXCHANGE SPONGES getting a water sponge this time, and ACTUALLY WASH OFF THE MESSAGE THAT IS VISIBLE TO YOU UPON THE NUMBER ONE SIDE. This slate is now placed on the Stand-rack,(message side away from audience) and the message is now shown at the proper time.

If #2 side is selected— wash the #1 side with the water-sponge, and wash the #2 side with the liquid "B" and proceed as above.

If the number 3 side is selected— Wash #1 and sides with the water-sponge, and the #3 side with the liquid "B". Wash #4 side with the water-sponge.

If the #4 side is selected— Wash the #1,2,and 3 sides with the water-sponge,and the #4 side with the sponge soaked in the "B" liquid.

In other words you merely WASH OFF THE MESSAGES FROM THE SIDES OF THAT ARE NOT SELECTED BY YOUR AUDIENCE, with the water sponge, and CAUSE the MESSAGE on the side of the slate that is SELECTED to become BLANK or INVISIBLE for the moment with the liquid "B" sponge.

INVISIBLE SPIRIT HAND METHOD NUMBER THREE .

In this, the last method, the success of its performance depends on the showmanship exhibited by the Performer as well as his manipulations, In order to acquaint the reader with the process— we outline this test experiment-- Use a Straw-board Slate with the message "fixed" unto it with the soft white chalk and the solution "A". Allow the MESSAGE to become DRY! Now, place the slate flat upon your table-top (Message side upwards). Pour a liberal quantity of solution "C" over its surface. The MESSAGE will FADE OUT. After the slate has soaked up this first flowing of solution "C", again pour a goodly quantity of it over the message side of this slate. NOW-- RAISE THE SLATE TO A VERTICAL POSITION and lean it against your stand-rack. Stop back a few feet from the rack, and you will witness the process in action as seen by your Spectators. AS THE LIQUID FLOWS DOWNWARDS OFF THE SLATE the UPPER LINE of the "message" will become VISIBLE.-- As the liquid flows off the slate entirely the other lines become VISIBLE— line— by— line. This effect is real uncanny when

seen from your present viewpoint. (You may let the liquid run off on to the table-top or if slate is hung by clips and a ribbon let liquid run unto floor or carnet— it is harmless).

STAGE PRESENTATION: For the VISIBLE APPEARANCE of a message under a question written upon the of a shown slate. Also INITIALS of SPECTATOR may be placed at the slate top for further identification. Have upon your table a shallow pan, slightly larger than the slate you are to use. Pan should be about one inch deep*(Pan sunken into the table top and pan bottom covered with table top material a very good idea to use). In two corners of this pan place two blocks of wood about one inch square. The Pan is filled with the Liquid "C".

The Message is written UPON THE LOWER L HALF OF THE SLATE with the SOFT CHALK just as in the other methods. WASH THE TOP HALF OF THIS PREPARED SLATE WITH A WATER SOAKED SILK SPONGE.(Do this off stage-being careful NOT to get any of the NOW VISIBLE MESSAGE WET WITH WATER.

Upon your table also have several pieces of the HARD "DUSTLESS-TYPE" CHALK. With your table set as above walk out uoon the Stage- with the prepared slate (VISIBLE MESSAGE SIDE AWAY FROM THE AUDIENCE). "In the Act of 1 CLEANING the slate insert it--writing side down--into the pan upon your table. Proceed to "wash" the top side of the slate with the liquid "C" that fills the pan. The bottom side of the slate having now been in the pan long enough to absorb the "C" liquid--the message is BLANK and the slate may be removed and "flushed" to your Audience. Show it on both sides bringing the "message" side facing you. You will now see that the top half of the slate — that which you washed off stage with a water soaked sponge--HAS RESISTED THE "BLOCK-OUT SOLUTION "C"— Pick up a piece of the HARD DUSTLESS CHALK and write the QUESTION or the INITIALS you are going to use. YOU WILL FIND THAT THE HARD "DUSTLESS" CHALK WILL NOT DISAPPEAR— as the soft one did— BUT THAT IT WILL STAND OUT IN CLEAR WHITE OUTLINE. QUICKLY show this question across the top of the slate—you will have ample time-before message begins to "MATERIALIZE" if you have soaked them long enough— Now you may place the slate wherever selected and await MATERIALIZATION.

For a VISIBLE EFFECT after showing question upon the top of slate, replace the slate into the pan--message side down--having the "question" end resting upon the two blocks OUT OF THE LIQUID* "WASH 1 the upper side again, and slate may now be removed from the "washing pan" and placed in a vertical position against the stand-rack or attached to ribbons and clips and hung from the center of your stage. ALL THAT WILL BE VISIBLE NOW IS THE QUESTION OR THE INITIALS AS THE CASE MAY BE. BUT-- AS THE

LIQUID "C" runs down OFF of the slate The FIRST LINE OF YOUR ANSWER OR MESSAGE will become visible RIGHT BEFORE YOUR SPECTATORS EYES.

First, it will appear FAINTLY! THEN CLEAR AND WHITE and IN REAL WHITE CHALK, as though it was written by some invisible spirit hand from the SPIRIT WORLD.

THE VIBRATION OR THE OSCILLATION METHOD.

EFFECT: (a). An ordinary unprepared slate is exhibited. Slate is held by PERFORMER— behind his back-- . Spectator now writes upon the SLATE WHILE HELD IN PERFORMERS HMDS-- Performer names at once-FIGURE— WORD—OR MESSAGE-WRITTEN THERE BY SPECTATOR.

EFFECT:- (a). Performer is now BLINDFOLDED— SLATE is held IRECTLY in front of performers body, with his outstretched hands holding same. The SPECTATOR again writes Name or Figure upon the SLATE, and AGAIN THE PERFORMER ANSWERS CORRECTLY!!!!I.

EXPLANATION: SLATE WRITING BY VIBRATION IS NOT A NEW METHOD. But it has REMARKABLE possibilities in Magic. It is a NEW Field for the magician to investigate. The "MESSAGE" is conveyed to the Performer thru his own "NERVE-SYSTEM". In the "A" EFFECT above, the slate is held LIGHTLY by the RIM, with the forefingers and the thumbs.-(Slate behind your back). A little CONCENTRATION as the Spectator is writing his or her word or number will convey-by-vibration-the MESSAGE .to you. The following test" method is very helpful to the NOVICE at the start*Procure a sheet of sand-paper about 10 X 13 inches. Glue this to a piece of Strawboard the same size. Place this SAND-SLATE behind your back, holding it lightly with the forefingers and the thumbs of each hand. Have your Assistant write upon this SAND SLATE with chalk. Start with single letters and figures first One, Two, Three!! etc. You will feel this VIBRATION-IMPRESSION very easily. The Chalk will "pull" when writing upon this rough surface. Go into the simple names next, i.e., ANN or DON or BILL etc, After you find you "get" these VIBRATIONS return to the single unprepared slate. You will now find that while the VIBRATIONS are less pronounced, they are still "STRONG" enough to catch. The Writer who has spent odd moments testing these methods is now able TO DETECT PENCIL WRITING upon an ordinary calling card held BEHIND HIS BACK. PRACTICE plus a little SHOWMANSHIP makes these tests appear to be nothing short of a MIRICALE.

THE SINGLE SLATS TESTS.

The use of a single slate for tests is very popular with many of the Performers at the present time. The Single--Slate type of work has

many advantages over the "two slate" and the "pile" slate methods. First, from an Audiences viewpoint single slate tests seem to be devoid of the "trickery" of the other methods. We present to the Student three such tests that we feel he might welcome at this time.

THE PENETRATION TEST!

EFFECT: Performer shows an ordinary Slate that is duly examined and Washed by a Spectator . A short word or a figure is now written upon one side of the slate. The word or figure is now ERASED with a cloth, and the SLATE IS TURNED OVER. UPON THE OTHER SIDE IS FOUND THE IDENTICAL WORD OR FIGURE— PERFORMER APPARENTLY RUBBING IT RIGHT THRU THE SLATE.

SECRET: Like most of those effects the secret itself is very simple. The Slate itself, is due for some minor preparation. An ordinary 5¢ slate is painted with one coat of black lacquer, The slate is coated with this care being used to keep it off of the rims. This lacquer-coating has but one function to perform. It renders ERASURE almost instantaneous. You will find that Chalk marks seem to "slide" right off at the touch of your finger. NOW— get some J and J CORN PLASTERS (Flesh-color) at your local drug store. Get the OVAL SHAPE.

These are little pads with a hole thru the center of them. One side of these little cotton pads has an adhesive surface. Moisten the adhesive side and place the pad upon the ball of your thumb. Insert into the center hole *a* piece of chalk about one quarter inch in height. This flesh colored pad will not be perceptible at close range. You are now ready for the test. After the slate has been passed *for* examination and returned to you, write a word or a number on it. While in the act of ERASURE of this word, place the slate in a horizontal position one end pressed against the stomach. SLOWLY ERASE THE WORD WITH THE CLOTH HELD IN THE RIGHT HAND and at the same time—REWRITE IT WITH THE BALL OF THE THUMB OF THE LEFT HAND (which has the chalk holding pad stuck to it) TURN THE SLATE *OVER* and show THE FIGURE HAS BEEN RUBBED RIGHT THRU!!

THE SELF ANSWERING SLATE TEST.

EFFECT: Performer writes a question upon a single slate. Question is now erased with a cloth. PRESTO! An answer APPEARS ON THIS SLATE WHERE A MOMENT BEFORE WAS THE QUESTION!

METHOD: The answer is written upon the slate with "Stearin" This will not be VISIBLE. The Question is written on the Slate with Soft White Chalk. Hard "Dustless" type will not due. The Act of erasing the Question with a dry cloth or sponge, brings out the answer. The SOFT CHALK leaves a deposit of WHITE CHALK DUST ON THE "STEARIN"ANSWER ALREADY THERE.

THE TWO SLATE TEST

This Is another simple and effective method of obtaining "A Spirit Message" without the use of "Flaps". This method may also be used directly after performing the SLATE MANIPULATION described elsewhere in this Manuscript. The marking of the cross-marks or X's in this method is very bewildering if done directly after the above mentioned Manipulation.

EFFECT: Performer exhibits two slates set together, one slightly larger than the other. Six by Nine inch and Ten by Thirteen inch slates are a good size to use. Performer now proceeds to mark an "X" or cross upon the OUTSIDE of these Slates. He then OPENS the Slates BOOK-FASHION and shows the INSIDE to be BLANK. He again puts the Slates together, (Blank sides outwards) and marks the outward sides with an "X" or cross. Now, (APPARENTLY) your Audience saw all four sides of the Slates marked, yet— upon opening the Slates, A SPIRIT MESSAGE IS FOUND WRITTEN UPON THE INSIDE OF THE SMALLER SLATE— REPLACING THE "X" MARK ORIGINALLY THERE.

METHOD OF WORKING: The message is written upon the inside of the small slate. Slates are placed together— (small slate on top-message side -inside) and slates are placed upon Performers table* Performer now picks up the slates, and MARKS the TOP slate--(small one)with a chalk mark cross. He now turns the slates OVER and makes another "X" upon. the LARGE SLATE now on the TOP. While his RIGHT HAND is marking this "X" upon the large slate now on the top— HIS LEFT FINGERS ERASE THE LIGHTLY, DRAWN "X" that is on the smaller slate UNDERNEATH. The Chalk Writing will ERASE very easily if the small slate is painted with LACQUER as decribed in the SINGLE SLATE TRICK explanation elsewhere in this Manuscript.

Performer now remarks that he will show the INSIDES of the TWO SLATES also. As he says this, the Performer takes one slate in each hand(the LARGE ONE STILL COVERING THE SMALL ONE)--and --UNDER-COVER--of the large Slate— Performers LEFT HAND gives the small slate a "HALF TURN" and then opens both slates up again "book-fashion". This "half-turn" throws the message writing out of sight. The Audience now SEE the side of the small slate you had marked but a moment ago, with an "X"— and had erased away under the cover of the large slate as described above. The small slate (Blank side facing your Audience)is now laid upon the larger one, the blank side of which now FACES OUT or DOWNWARDS. Both Slates are again marked upon the now exposed blank sides with an "X". The Message is now upon the INSIDE again, and may be revealed by the Performer at the proper time.

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Mysteries Of The Seance

And Tricks And Traps Of Bogus Mediums (1903)

Edward D. Lunt

MYSTERIES
OF
THE SEANCE
AND
TRICKS AND TRAPS OF
BOGUS MEDIUMS

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A Plea for Honest Mediums and
Clean Work

=====
BY A LIFE-LONG SPIRITUALIST
=====

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"INDEPENDENT" SLATE-WRITING.

There are many different ways of producing so-called independent slate-writing, and they are nearly all variations of two methods—substitution and the silicate flap. Occasionally chemicals are used, but they are not practicable in many cases. Where mediums own their homes, carpet slides, trap doors, sliding panels and drapery hangings are used to advantage, and remarkable manifestations are given, by the aid of these appliances and confederates. Sometimes the

sitter is placed with his back to and near hanging portieres, or a sliding panel. A pair of clean slates are handed him and examined. He writes a question to some spirit friend, on a piece of paper, or on the slate, puts the paper between the slates, secures them with a rubber band, and the medium takes the slate, holds it a few minutes on the sitter's shoulder or top of his head. The sitter is willing to swear that no human power could have written upon the slate, yet in a few moments the slates are opened and found to be full of writing with the questions answered. A confederate behind the curtains or panel had noiselessly and deftly exchanged the first pair of slates for another pair, fixed the first pair and returned them in like manner. This can be done to the sharpest sitter without detection, unless he is "onto" the trick.

The pad method most generally used is to have silicate or black cardboard sheets cut to exact size of the slate, inside the frame (silicate is best for critical audiences, but black cardboard or most any old thing will go when all present are credulous.) In this method the slates have been previously prepared with the names and messages (procured as explained in previous pages) which are concealed by the false flaps. Where one slate only has writing only one flap is required, and two where both slates are written upon. Where one flap is used the slates are shown apparently perfectly clean. The slates are then put together, the written one underneath, and the two secured with a rubber band. After the sitter has held them awhile, or perhaps they have been hung on the chandelier a few moments, the medium turns the slates over and removes the upper one—the prepared one. This leaves the flap on the lower or clean slate, which is then laid aside, so as not to be examined by the sitter or audience. There are many variations of the flap method, and many ways of getting rid of the false flap without detection. Some let it drop into the lap, when a table is between the parties. Others have the side of the flap that goes next the writing covered with a piece of newspaper, and lay the slate face down upon a newspaper lying upon a table or the floor. When the slate is picked up of course the flap remains on the newspaper and is not noticed. Others have a piece of sticky fly paper fastened underneath the table-top. When the slate with the pad on is held under the table a few moments to give the "spirits" a chance to do

the writing, the slate is pressed against the piece of fly paper, the pad stays right there and the slate is withdrawn filled with writing. Where the sitter brings his own slates, which are thrown upon the floor, or hung upon the gas pendant, then taken down and found filled with writing, it is a trick, just the same. The medium makes a "switch" and exchanges or substitutes a pair that looks like the sitter's, fixes the slates under cover of the table, then picks up the slates from the floor, makes another switch, and hands the sitter his own, all properly fixed and written upon. Some may doubt this and insist that their slates could not have been changed—"were not out of their sight for an instant," etc. But we can in all truth assure them it was done as we have described. You know the hand is quicker than the eye, when the operator is an expert. And we are here to tell you that the most successful and prosperous professional mediums are experts in their business. They cannot succeed otherwise.

Another plan used by one of the most popular slate-writing mediums, is to have one large sized slate and a pile of smaller ones, the latter being cloth-bound school slates. The large slate is his "magnetized" slate, and is always in his hands when giving a sitting. It serves to conceal the prepared slate, which is held underneath the large one. This is always prepared in advance with a message that will fit almost anyone, and the signature left to be filled in later. The sitter is seated at a table or stand on which is a pile of similar slates and some cards and small envelopes. He is directed to write one or more names of "spirit" friends on a card and seal it up in an envelope. The medium takes the envelope, holds it to his forehead a moment "to get your magnetism," apparently hands it back or lays it on the table in front of the person, who is then asked to wash and wipe clean the pile of ten or a dozen slates. This gives the operator a chance to "fix" the slate he has partly prepared. He opens (under cover of the large slate) the envelope that the victim prepared, reads the names, and questions, if any, fills in the names and answers, and is ready for the final act—getting the prepared slate into the hands of the victim without detection. Taking a seat directly in front of the sitter, who has washed and dried the pile of slates, he (the medium) asks the other to take two of the slates in his hands—any two. He then takes one of these in his own hands for

a moment, to "see if it is washed clean" and directs the sitter to hand him the envelope supposed to contain the names. When the sitter turns away for a moment to reach for the envelope, a quick turn of the large slate brings the prepared one on top—written side down. This the medium then places on the other slate held by the sitter and a rubber band is placed around them. The sitter is directed to sit, perhaps twenty minutes with the slates in his hands, after which he opens them and finds one covered with writing—in colors, perhaps—with one or more of the names he wrote on the card. At the close of the sitting the medium usually asks permission to open and read the sealed envelope (which of course is the dummy he substituted, and this gives him an opportunity to change again, and the sitter is handed back his own envelope. This is a very convincing method of getting "independent" slate-writing, in a private sitting.

It is a rule among slate-writers to not give or use the same method twice with the same sitter, unless he is an exceptionally "easy mark," for the same reason that a magician will never perform the same trick twice before the same audience.

Another method used by the above mentioned medium is this: A pile of slates, say a dozen or so, are placed on the table and the sitter directed to examine, wash thoroughly and dry all of them. The medium, during this operation, is getting a "message" on his large slate "automatically," and after the slates are washed he carelessly places it on top of the pile, and shows the message to the sitter. He then takes away the large slate, which leaves the prepared slate that he had underneath it, now on the top of the pile. Then taking the two top slates, places a rubber band around them and hands to the sitter to hold. Of course, when open, the slate is found to contain a message. This method is generally used for the second sitting with a customer, and the medium already has the names to give messages from.

Some mediums place the slates under your chair, if they have had no chance to fix them for you. In such cases either a slide is prepared by which the slate is conveyed to a helper in an adjoining room, or the helper pulls it to within his reach by means of a hook on the end of a stick. Usually there is a crack under the door large enough to let the slate pass through, and the victim is seated by design in a position favorable for that purpose. This scheme is also used

for giving sittings where sealed letters are to be answered. The helper in the other room is very useful in many ways.

Some slate writers, most generally females, have a number of pockets concealed in their clothing, and by this means do very clever work without detection. They can carry several prepared slates, and it is very easy to ring them in on a customer.

To get writing on the inside of a sitter's slates when they are simply tied together, or fastened with a rubber band, is an easy proposition—if you know how. You have a piece of soft slate pencil always with you. Seat the victim at a table, you on the opposite side. You hold one end of the slates, he the other, under the table for fifteen or twenty minutes, talking all the time to occupy his mind. During this time manage to rest your end of the slate on your knee, then write carefully with the pencil on the outside of the slate, whatever you wish, the more the better. Then, on some pretext, manage to turn the slate over to bring the writing underneath. After a time remark that it is time something was written, and bring the slates to the top of the table, being careful to keep the writing concealed underneath. Untie the slates and open. Of course there is nothing there. Say, "We will try it again." Put in a small—very small piece of pencil, and place the slates together again, being careful to reverse the previous order, which would bring the written side of the slate inside. Tie up again and let him hold them any way you think of. Of course he will be delighted to find writing on the inside of his own slates "that never left his hands or his sight," and he will boom you as a wonderful medium.

In giving sittings slate writing mediums are governed by circumstances as to the method they shall use. Each has several. One way is to juggle the slates, and practice makes perfect in this as in other things. Take two slates, one side of one being written on. The trick is to show the three empty sides repeatedly and lead the audience to think they have seen all four sides, and that they were all clean. Hold one slate in each hand, the written side toward you and away from the audience. Show both sides of the empty one, turning it deliberately. Then direct attention to the visible side of the other, and place the two together, the last one on top. The writing is now inside, and you show the bottom or

under side once more. A slick operator can make this very effective.

Chemicals are seldom used by professionals in slate writing. One method is to dissolve small pieces of zinc in muriatic acid. Write with this upon a slate, and you have a writing that will not rub out. When you wash the slate with water the writing disappears completely. Upon drying the writing appears bright and clear as if just written with a pencil. But the slate will be no good for anything else, as the writing is eaten into it by the acid.

A very sharp trick of some mediums is to arrange with a stationer or some one located near their rooms who keeps slates, to sell prepared slates furnished by the medium, to certain customers. For instance: You prepare a number of slates, of the kind kept by that party, with some general messages and pictures that will fit any one. These are neatly wrapped up in pairs and put away in a handy place. A sitter comes to you with his own slates. He is sharp and a hard one. You sit a little with his slates and your "guide" tells you the slates are no good, that good results cannot be obtained with them. You suggest that such a store, near by, keeps good slates of a quality that always seems to give best results. You instruct him to get a certain make of slate, and by that token the merchant knows just what to give him. He shows him a pair from his stock and lets him examine them thoroughly, wraps them up and—secretly exchanges them for the prepared ones. The customer goes back with them and is delighted to get a beautiful message and picture on new slates that he was "absolutely certain" could not have been done by mortal hand. The storekeeper of course gets a small rake-off for his trouble.

A pure nitrate of silver pencil is sometimes used with good results. Write with one of these, breathe upon the writing and it will disappear. Wet it with salt water and it comes out again bright and clear and white.

Some mediums are expert at writing with a pencil held between the toes. They put a slate on the floor underneath the table, grasp the sitter's hands with their own, and a written message comes on the slate. The medium wears slippers and has the toe of his right stocking cut off. With a bit of pencil between the great toe and the next he does the "spirit" writing.

We occasionally find a slate-writing medium who gives

public slate-writings in a hall, before large audiences, and if there are none present who know his method, it is usually a success. The advertisement invites the audiences to bring their own slates, and they do so, sometimes a hundred or more. Of course it is explained that it may not be possible for all to get writing on their slates, but the medium "will do the best he can if all will give him their best thoughts, etc., to make the conditions good." After the opening music, and a talk upon "conditions," the medium passes through the audience and touches each slate. During this performance it is usual for some "skeptic" present to interrupt the medium repeatedly with a demand that writing be produced upon his particular slates. He is awfully skeptical, and "knows it can't be done." Finally the medium, apparently much irritated, offers to try, if the skeptic will allow him to read to the audience whatever may come on the slates. This is agreed to, and the performance continues. At the close the slates are opened and perhaps a dozen or more, including the skeptic's, are found to contain writing, some in various colors. This always brings forth applause from the believers in the audience, and the skeptics are mystified. The trick is very simple. The slates with writing on are prepared beforehand and brought by friends or assistants of the medium. The persistent skeptic was also an assistant—a paid one, usually, and acts his part well. This method also offers an excellent opportunity for the introduction of several sensational tests.

A very successful plan for getting slate-writings in dark circles, is to have the audience bring their own slates, and place them in a pile on a table near the medium. During the seance, after the lights are out, one of the ladies present (a relative or paid assistant of the medium) is taken with a sick or faint spell, and is compelled to go out of the room for awhile. She is carefully let out without lighting up, as that would disturb the conditions. After a time she returns, feeling better. At the close of the seance the light is turned on and some beautiful messages, and perhaps a few pictures are found on the slates on the table. As this work manifestly could not have been done by the medium in the dark, the natural conclusion is that it was the work of spirits. It was—but it was the spirit of the lady who got sick and had to retire. The slates went with her, and were "fixed" in another room, in the light. Returning, she

brought them back and placed them as before on the table, in the same order. This trick is also very handy in the production of other manifestations.

We have not described any of the trick slates, as they are seldom, if ever, used by mediums in these days. As a rule mediums depend upon the quickness of their hand and the confidence of the sitter in their powers. If a medium has at the first interview, either in a hall or private sitting, been able to give a person a "test" that is a good one—that is, something that the person is positive he could not have obtained except from some spirit friend, that person is thereafter a firm believer in the medium's powers, and ready to accept almost anything without question. For this reason mediums of that class are particular to post themselves, by the methods we have described elsewhere, as to the deceased relatives and friends of all the prominent Spiritualists in cities which they visit. Also other items that may be of use. They have been known to visit cemeteries and pick up names and particulars in that way. They sometimes surprise persons by giving them their full names, including the middle name, which is seldom if ever used. This is obtained, in the case of men, from the registry of voters. In some states the entire full name must appear on the register. †

One medium with whom we had a sitting had us write a question and name of a spirit friend on a pad, then tear the sheet off and hold it, folded up. He then took a slate in his lap, went under "control," and wrote a lot of stuff on the slate himself. The purport of it was that the spirit friends were present and would write if possible. The slate was then washed on both sides, before our eyes, and laid in front of us on the table. Presently it was lifted up and found full of writing, answering the question signed with the name of the spirit friend. It was done this way, as we absolutely know now (we didn't then, being very credulous). When the medium wrote under "control," one side of the slate was covered with a silicate pad. He wrote on this pad and on the other side of the slate. While doing this writing he slipped the pad aside (as he wrote in his lap) and under it wrote the answer and name. He had obtained this from the paper pad we had written on. A sheet of carbon paper under the sheet had copied the writing there. When washing the slate of course he washed off the writing on the silicate

pad. Then this pad was secretly dropped in his lap, and the slate placed writing downward, in front of us. We were willing to swear the slate was clean on both sides when laid down. You see it is not always safe to judge from appearances.

Questions folded and placed between two slates, which are then tied together, are easily removed, answered and returned by mediums who do that sort of work. The inside edge of the frame is whittled down so it will not catch the folded paper. Thus prepared, a thin wedge is inserted, the slates pried slightly apart, the paper slips out, the answer is written, and the paper returned. This is very easily done by covering the slates and working under the cover.

The simplest and crudest form of fake slate-writing is still practiced by a few mediums, and they find many patrons among the blindly credulous. The medium holds the slate in her lap, grasping it with her right hand, the thumb uppermost, and covering both slate and her hand with a dark cloth or shawl, to produce the necessary darkness. Soon a faint scratching noise is heard on the slate and it is assumed that the "spirits" are writing. Probably the medium will be talking all the time, giving names or describing spirits. When the slate is shown, a scrawl of writing—or rather alleged writing—is found upon what was the under side of the slate. If the scrawl (it is seldom more than that) cannot be read by the sitter, the medium can always translate it. In such cases it is generally taken for granted by the sitter that it was a physical impossibility for the medium herself to have done the writing. A little practice, however, is all that is necessary to produce the very meagre amount of writing that generally comes. Of course the writing must be done backwards, and with the forefinger, under the nail of which it is easy to conceal a small piece of slate pencil. Some mediums have a tiny pocket in the clothing which contains the bit of pencil, and is located where it is handy to reach and yet cannot be noticed. This trick can be improved by the medium continuing the writing on the other side while the sitter is reading that which was first written. This also is difficult, but can be successfully done by practice, with an "easy" sitter, without detection.

Another very good trick is for the medium to take four or five slates in his hand and, standing beside the sitter, a little in the rear, so he cannot be watched closely, hand them one

by one to the sitter and ask him to examine and wash them, to be certain there is no cheating. Each slate, after being washed and wiped thoroughly, is handed back to the medium, who puts it on the bottom of the pile in his hand. One of these slates has always been prepared with a written message of some sort. When the medium reaches this one he deftly turns the pile over and hands the sitter one that has already been washed and dried. This completes the number held by the medium, and the sitter is as certain as he can be that he has seen and washed every slate in the lot. And when the medium lays the slates out on the table, and after a season of waiting one is found filled with writing, there is no doubt in the sitter's mind that the work was all straight. Perhaps he takes the slate home and treasures it for years as a sacred possession. There are thousands of slates thus treasured in homes of Spiritualists as sacred relics that were wholly prepared by some rascally medium without a trace of spirit aid. Even where the parties claim to recognize the handwriting of the spirit supposed to have written the communication, a faithful comparison of the same with some actual writing of the deceased would dispel the illusion, unless the person is so far gone mentally that he is incapable of comparison.

Celestial Agent

by
CHARLES
J. MALY



CELESTIAL AGENT

An easy road to mind reading, mental and spirit effects,
and muscle reading, complete with lecture and patter,

by

CHARLES J. MALY

Illustrations

by

GORDON M. HOWATT

Published by

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1944

A LADY CONTACTS HEAVEN

And now we approach another fascinating phase of modern spiritualism - slate writing, or what is technically known as psychography. Such well known mediums as Slade, Keeler, and Bishop, were especially proficient in securing written messages on unprepared school slates under test conditions.

I will demonstrate a slate test that is very similar to the one used by that celebrated medium, Dr. Henry Slade, who completely baffled and converted the eminent German scientist, Professor Max Zollner of Berlin in 1878. Professor Zollner, with characteristic scientific accuracy believed it to be the result of the fourth dimension!

The test is quite simple, but watch the fairness of every step. Two school slates such as can be found, in any school store are used.

Both sides are free from any writing, but I will thoroughly wash all four surfaces one by one in approved spiritualistic fashion. All Psychic investigators insist that the slates be subjected to a sponge bath before the seance starts! Thus made sanitary and beautiful, we will further enhance them by tying them together with this ribbon, and, madam, I wonder if you will be kind enough to rise and hold the slates on your two hands, up at chest level where all can see them.

In a demonstration of this kind I find that the ladies are particularly interested in having something personal happen to them, and since every woman is anxious to pierce the veil of the future, I am going to let a few of the ladies ask any question they like of the spirit world. Those in the beyond know the answers. I will pass out these slips of paper and the ladies receiving them will each write a question concerning business, travel, love, marriage, health or the like. Address the message to someone departed, and sign your first name. If you have nothing to ask, write your telephone number and I'll call you up tomorrow night!

METHOD: We will explain the method here, and the balance of the patter will follow a bit later. As shown before, you will need two ordinary slates and one flap.

Some performers very familiar with slate work can get by with only a single slate and flap, but two slates make it much easier and we recommend the easy way always. On one slate write in chalk, in scrip (see illustration) as follows: *"Dear Mary: No, not if I have to live with you. John"*. Lay this slate blank side down on the table, lay flap over writing, and lay the other slate on top of it. When ready for the trick, wash them off with a damp cloth, holding flap well against slate so nothing is noticed, then put them in the same order as they were lying, and let the lady hold them, bound around with a ribbon or heavy elastic band.

Have about eight squares of paper, 2x2 inches in size, each of which has been previously folded once, and then again, but which are now opened out by the time they are handed to eight different ladies. This encourages the idea of folding them in the same manner.

Distribute the pieces of paper as widely as possible, keeping the assisting spectators well apart. In your pocket have an identical square of paper, similarly folded, and on which is written in feminine handwriting: *"Dear John: Would you like to live on earth again? Mary"*. Secure this in your fingers (finger palm) when you casually thrust your hand into your jacket pocket, while explaining what questions may be asked. Don't clench your fist over it. It will be just a tiny folded square of paper. Curl your fingers slightly and it will rest in the curve.

"Now that the questions seem to have been completed, will one of the gentlemen lend us a hat? Thank you. (Show the inside of the hat to audience, transferring it to the other hand as you talk, and at a moment when it is tipped back in your direction, slide your message, which you have been holding in your fingers until now, under the sweat band.

Now either pass the hat yourself or ask someone else to do it and collect the folded messages from the ladies.) All the folded messages written by the ladies are in the hat now and I will ask this

lady closest to me to hold the hat high in the air so I can select a message at random.

(Reach into the hat, sift the messages thru your fingers, so the audience can see them falling back into the hat. Do this a few times conspicuously, and about the third time, as you stir them around, get your own message. Your entire hand is out of sight in the hat, and you have had time during the sifting to look at hat and recall at what point under the sweat band you left the message. Bring the message out from the hat, hand it still folded to the lady holding the hat, and remove hat from her hand, putting it back on the table.)

“Will you please read the message aloud, madam, and then we will see if the spirits will answer it.

(Lady reads: "Dear John: Would you like to live on earth again? Mary". Performer takes message from her).

Let me read it. Let's see (as if making out writing) yes, it says , "Dear John, would you like to live on earth again?" and it is signed Mary.”

“Mary? “ (Looks around audience as if to locate Mary. Then a look of attention, as if he did see a raised hand). Oh, yes. Over there. Well, Mary, we'll see what John thinks about it.”

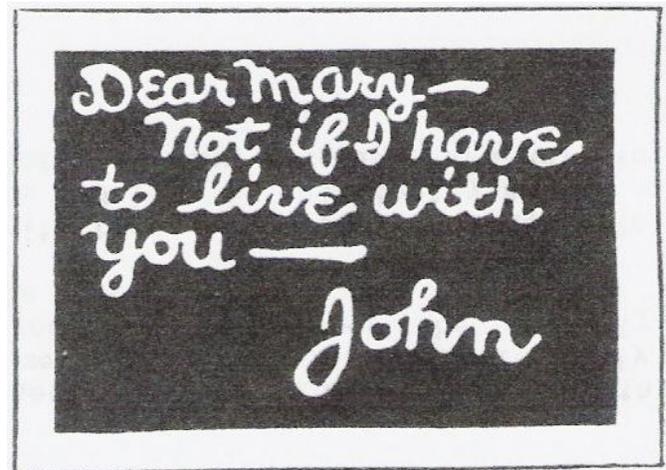
(Turning to lady holding slates). “How, madam, you hold tightly to one end of these slates and I'll hold the other. Spirits don't frighten you, do they? Listen, perhaps you'll hear the message being written.

(Wait for silence in the room, and then scratch with finger nail on underside of slate to simulate chalk writing - always good for a surprised gasp or even a squeal from the lady helper). Hold slates so the writing is on under side of top one. (Remove rubber band or ribbon. Lift off top slate, tipping it toward you so audience does not see the writing yet. The flap falls into the lower slate, and grasping lower slate on the slate part, so you grip flap against slate, between thumb and forefinger, swing slate slightly so audience sees both sides as you lay it on the table.)

(Now hold message before the eyes of the lady helping you. Her amazement and amusement show at once, so the audience is very eager to see the slate. But before turning it for them to see, repeat the message that was written on the slip of paper, adding: "Remember ladies and gentlemen, I am not responsible for what the spirits write.")

Laughingly turn the slate over for all to read, and pass it to them if you like.) Note: A card box or a changing bag may be used instead of the hat but you will be wise to eliminate props wherever possible.

I might add as a personal note that altho there never was a "Mary" for the above trick, very often members of the audience would talk to me after the show, and anxious to be let in on something, would say: "I know just who wrote that message. No wonder her poor dear husband answered that way. Why, she's a..." etc., etc., until I indeed felt sorry for dear John!



THE CELESTIAL AGENT GOES PATRIOTIC

(The following routine and handling of the slates is credited to Robert Parrish.)

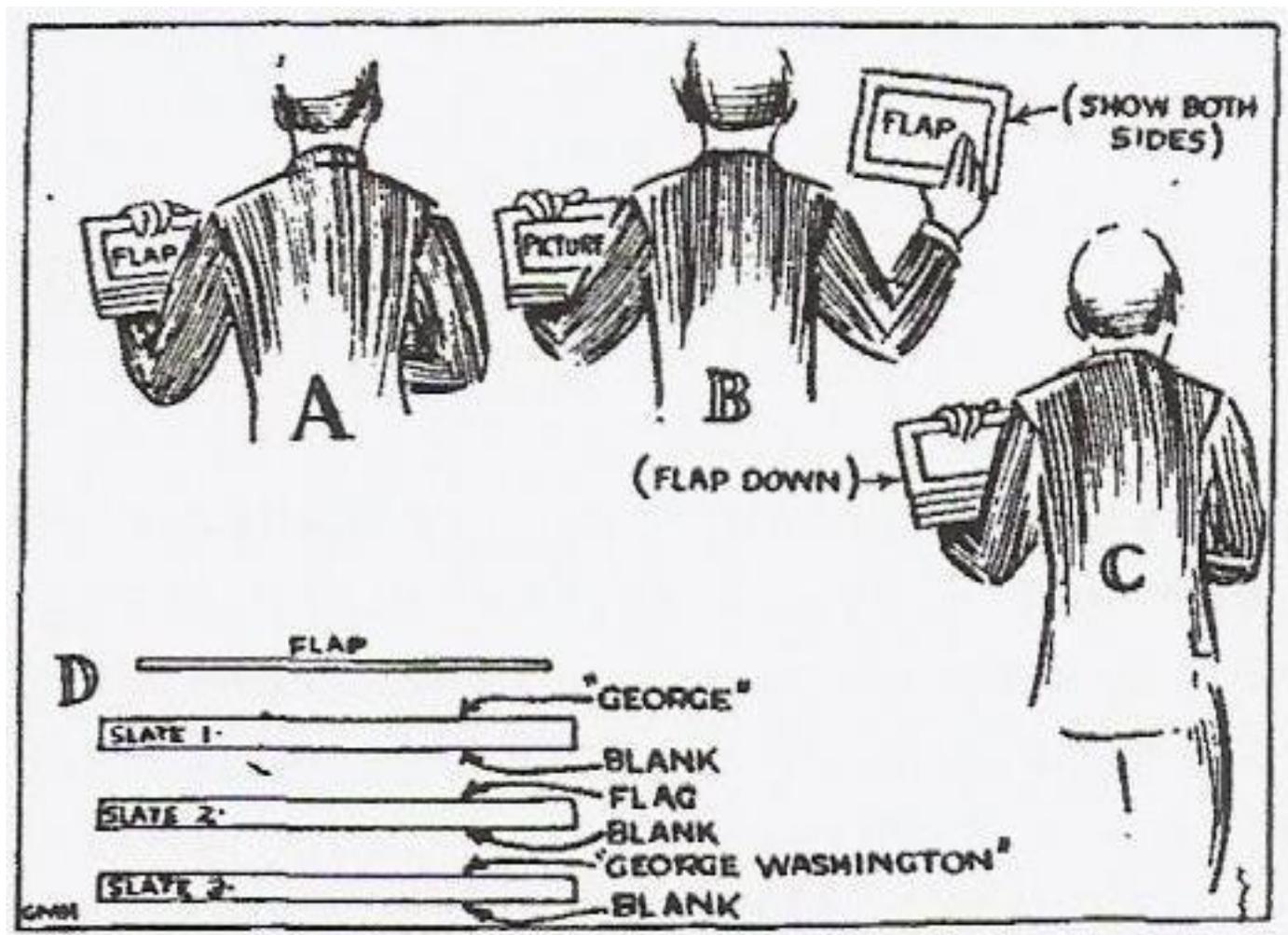
Now that our co-operative spirits are really helping us - sometimes a little too well- judging by that last demonstration, let's try once more with the slates. This time we will not guide them with questions of any kind, but rather will let them take their own path and see what happens.

I will again give the slates that necessary sponge bath - how the spirits do respond to water! And how I respond to spirits - no, no, I didn't mean that! Now, having washed them, we will write a number 1 on this slate and stand it on the chair here, and a number 2 on this slate and stand it next to number 1. On this third slate, I will write the name 'George '. If the spirits are on the job right now, that name should have been written on one of the other slates by a spirit

at the same moment I wrote. That's what they usually do for me. And in full light, with no human contact, you see they have done just that!

Let us erase the word George off both slates - as if our futile human efforts could prevent the spirits from writing when they wish. (With both slates washed, one is tucked under the arm, and Performer holds up the other.)

“I will again write the name George and will add his last name - shall we say - Washington? Quickly now! Let's try to trap them - pull the blank slate from under my arm! No, they were still quicker than us. You see, they've already written the message on the second slate - George Washington! Well, sir, grab that blank slate on the table - see what they've done to it! A full colored picture of the flag of the United States of America!”



METHOD: To be sure you get the effect, two slates are fairly shown on both sides and after being numbered 1 and 2, respectively, are placed side by side on a chair.

On a third slate the magician writes a name "George", explaining that whatever he writes will automatically be reproduced on the slates. He seizes the first slate and slowly turns it over, revealing a similarly written "George". Both writings are completely erased. The writing appears no matter how well the slates are rubbed off, the magician explains, going over both sides of the slates he holds and deliberately showing them on both sides. Tucking one under his arm, he offers to repeat writing "George" and adding "Washington". Stepping up to a spectator, the latter is allowed to pull the slate from under the magician's arm and hold it up to show the duplicate "George Washington".

The man holding the slate is asked to step up and show what effect George Washington has had upon the slate on the table (slate numbered 2) which has been in view throughout. The man holds up the slate, and on it has materialized an American flag in full color and completely covering the surface of the slate! And the interesting thing is that both slates bearing the materializations are being held by the spectator, who may examine them as he wishes.

Let us now follow the routine of secret moves, remembering that the effect is briefly the three successive materializations upon the slates.

The Set-Up: Three LARGE slates and one flap are used. On one is written "George", and this is covered by the flap. This slate, flap up, is placed on top of the slate on which the flag has been drawn with colored chalk, which is picture side up.

On the bottom goes the third slate on which "George Washington" has been written and this too is message side up- Chalk and a cloth to wipe slates lie on the table. Showing the Slates: In presenting, pick up the stack of slates and turning them (message sides), toward you, remove the top (flap) slate and show it slowly on both sides, holding flap in place with fingers.

Return it to the stack FLAP SIDE DOWN (on top of the picture) and, turning the slates slightly to audience, write a figure one on the slate and place it numeral out (minus flap which falls to cover picture), against the chair back. Do all this deliberately, so they may be sure no switch is made.

Repeat the procedure with the second slate, which leaves you with a single slate and flap (covering message). This slate is casually shown as you explain that whatever, you write thereon will be instantly duplicated on the other slates by the spirits.

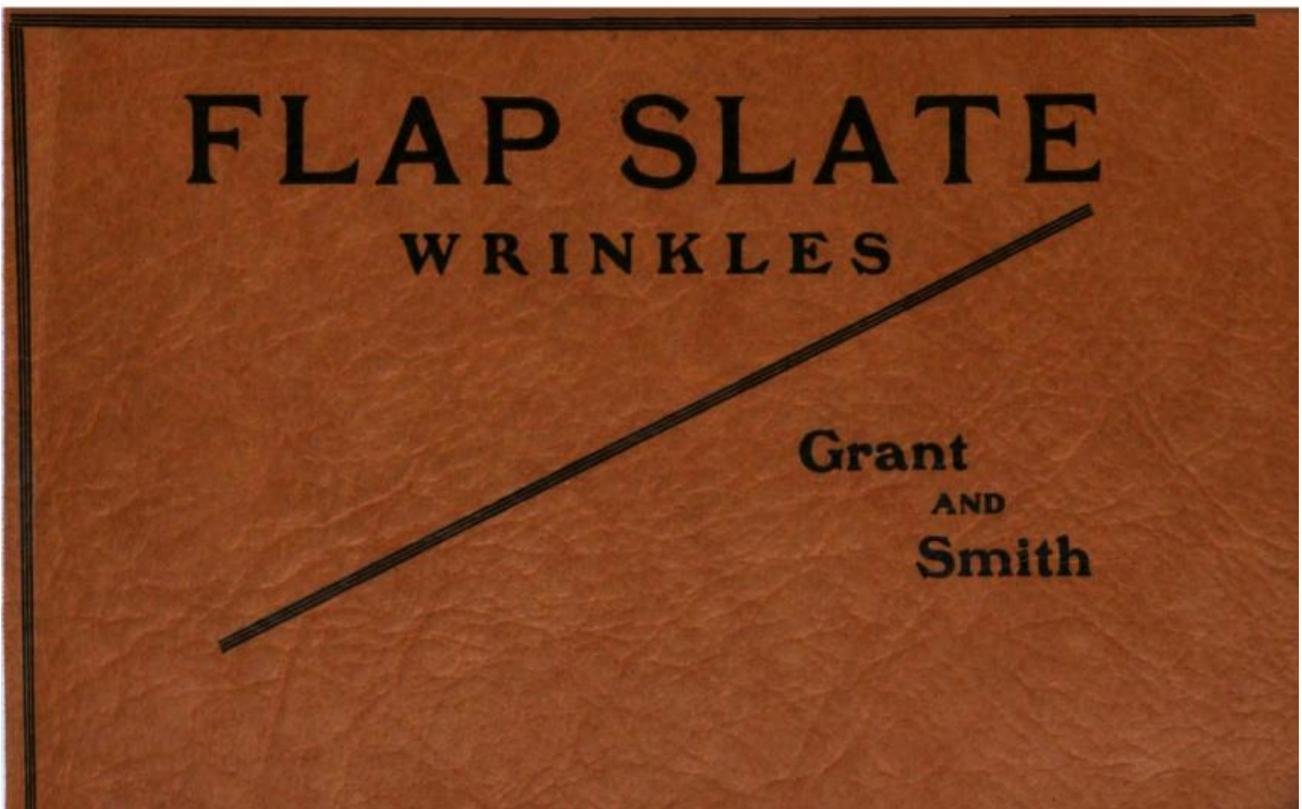
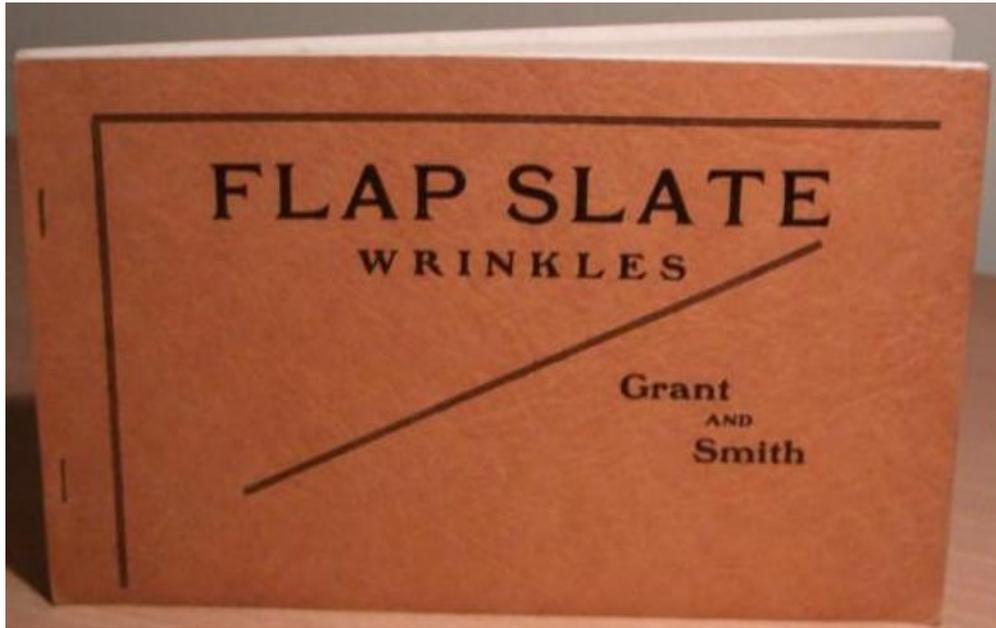
The First Materialization: Write the name "George" on the slate in hand. Grasp the number one slate and turn it reluctantly around - there is the same name. The two slates bearing the names are held in either hand, names out, flap slate being in the left.

The Second Materialization: Place the slate in the right hand, on top of the one that is in the left. Pick up the cloth and rub off the name. Turn the slate over and erase the number. Top slate, erased, is placed under the right arm, while the other (flap) slate is rubbed off on both sides. When finished, it is held in the right hand which also still holds cloth. Left takes slate from under arm and the two slates are slowly presented on both sides, unmistakably blank.

Now place flap slate flap down on slate in left hand to permit right hand to place cloth aside on table and pick up chalk. Right then takes back this top slate and tucks it, blank side out, under right arm, right side to audience, while "George - Washington" is written in full view on left slate (which now carries flap). Spectator pulls slate out from under your arm and holds it up showing the inevitable work of the spirit.

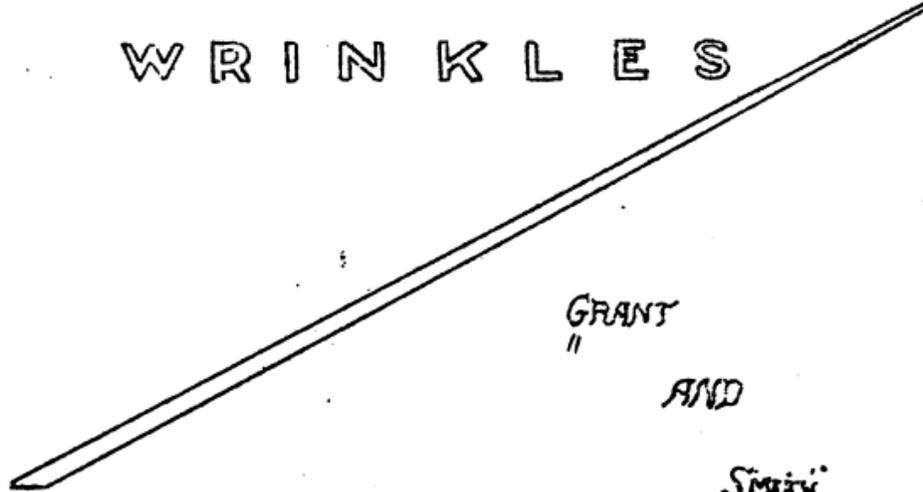
(Please note that the moves in cleaning the slates and switching the flap are what would be normally done in erasing two slates. The spectators do not realize that the message appears on the other slate because of the handling in the erasing. It apparently makes no difference anyway as both are shown blank).

The Third Materialization is already taken care of and it is only necessary for the spectator to turn slate number 2 about and show. You have built up to a nice climax and if they won't applaud for the flag you might as well pack up and go home.



FLAP SLATE

WRINKLES



GRANT
"

AND

Smith

FLAP SLATE WRINKLES

by

U.F. GRANT and H. ADRIAN SMITH
"

A treatise on novel uses of the

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PREFACE

In launching our little manuscript upon the world of criticism, we have one aim alone- that of providing the reader with some novel, and, we hope, effective means of using his old spirit slates.

In preparing this work, we have had to resort to the use of two old principles of slate manipulation, namely, the Window Envelope, and the move, which we have called in want of a better name, "A Master Move With Slates". In presenting these two methods, we lay no claim to originality. However, since they may be unfamiliar to many of our readers, they are here included without further apologies for their presence.

Our first effort has been to provide effects which are far from the beaten path. This fact may be readily ascertained by glancing through the pages- for where will effects so far from the beaten path as "Cut and Restored Ribbon" and "A Three Card Monte" with slates be found?

Our work in devising these problems has been truly a labor of love, for if there is anything more enjoyable to the authors than searching for new effects, it is only in performing them. We sincerely hope that you will find our manuscript as interesting as we did in its preparation.

THE WINDOW ENVELOPE

This is a very clever and useful way of getting rid of the inevitable flap, and while the authors cannot claim it as their own, many of the effects in the manuscript depend upon its use, and we therefore offer no further apologies for its inclusion.



It consists of an envelope with a window cut in it as shown. The slate flaps used in connection with the envelope have paper to match that used in the envelope glued on one side, and when the flaps are left in the envelope with the paper side toward the window, the envelope appears to be empty.

In using a slate with the envelope, it is a good idea to have the side of the slate opposite the flap side marked for identification, having the mark written where it will show through the window as shown in the sketch

The advantages of the method are obvious, and, indeed it is one of the very few practicable ways of getting rid of the flap when using a single slate.

THE TELEVISION SLATE

EFFECT:- A number of cards with names of famous people on them are shown, and one is selected. The performer states that he is now going to present the latest television invention. He shows two slates to be free from writing, places one in an envelope, and puts it on his table. He states that whatever he writes on the slates in his hands will appear on the slate on the table. He asks what name was selected, and let us say, for example, that "Lincoln" is the name. He writes "LIN", and stops. Going over to the table, he removes the slate, and on it are the letters "LIN". He replaces it, and on his slate in his hands, he writes "COLN", completing the name. Upon showing the slate on the table, the word "LINCOLN" is found to have arrived completely, and the slate is passed for examination

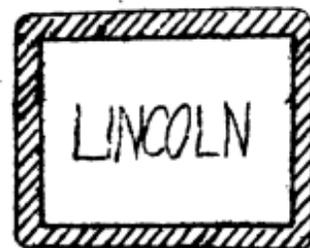


Fig 1

PREPARATION:- Two slates, two flaps, a window envelope and a means of forcing the name of a famous person are required. For forcing the name, a changing bag method may be used, or you may buy a pack of blank playing cards from a magical dealer, and write the same name on about thirty of them, in this case "LINCOLN". and write the names of other noted per-

sonages on the remainder, placing them on the bottom of the pack so as to show the pack "all different" by running over the names of about ten of the bottom ones.

On one of the slates, write the word to be forced. We shall continue to use "LINCOLN" in the illustration. Then place a flap over the word, and write on the flap the first syllable of the word, as "LIN". The flaps used in the effect are backed with paper as explained in the preceding effect. The flap with the "LIN" has a little tab as shown, the use of which will be shown presently. The second flap is placed on top of this flap, and the slate appears blank.

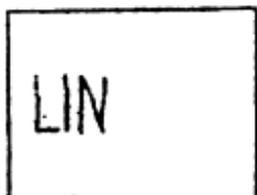


Fig 2.

METHOD:- Show slates, and place the one with the flaps in the envelope with the flap side away from the window. If desired the envelope may be passed for examination before beginning and the unprepared side of the flap may be marked for identification. After placing the slate in the envelope, the envelope is placed on the table.

Then the name is forced as indicated. Pick up the other slate, and write the first syllable of the name on it. Take the other slate out of the envelope, leaving the blank flap behind. The tab on the inner flap aids in this manipulation as you can hold back on the inner flap by means of your thumb as you release the outer flap. The slate is shown, and the first syllable is seen to have arrived. The slate is then replaced and the performer writes the rest of the word. When the slate in the envelope is removed, the whole name is found to have arrived, and the slate is passed for examination.

ANOTHER LIVING AND DEAD MYSTERY

EFFECT:- The performer passes a slate ruled as shown for examination. When it is returned, he has a spectator write the name of a dead person on it, as indicated. He has the slate marked for identification, and places it in an envelope, which he explains is his "spirit cabinet", and explains that he wants to give the spirits a chance to get an impression of the name. He then writes four names of living persons as called out by the spectators. He then erases all five names, and places the slate back into the envelope. When he again removes it, the name of the dead person is found to have been rewritten on the slate "by the spirits" in the spectator's own handwriting, and the slate is passed for examination.

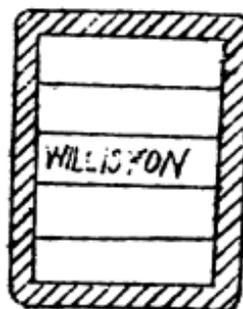


Fig 1

PREPARATION:- The requirements for this effect are as follows: a slate with white lines painted on one side as shown in figure 1, a flap painted on one side to match the slate as shown in figure 2, and a window envelope. The flap is backed with paper as explained under "The Window Envelope". On the flap write the name of a dead person in the middle space as shown in figure 2, the reason for using the middle space being that the name written later by the spectator on the slate proper will show up better if it is in the middle space. The flap is placed in the envelope with the writing side away from the window.

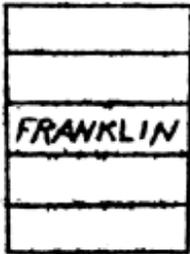


Fig 2.

METHOD:- Pass the slate for examination, and when it is returned, have a spectator write down the last name of any deadperson he thinks of, asking him quietly to write it on the center space. Then turn the slate over and have a spectator mark it for identification. Show the name to the audience, and place the slate in the envelope with the name away from the window "to give the spirits the impression of the dead person's name". Also comment on the spectator's mark showing through the window, thus indirectly calling attention to the fact that there has been no exchange of slates.

After a few moments, remove the slate, and with it the flap. Have different spectators call out the names of living persons, and as they do so, you write them down apparently on the slate, but really on the flap, as the flap now covers the slate. When you have five names down, give the spectators a flash of the names, but don't give them time to read any of the names.

After a few moments, remove the slate, and with it the flap. Have different spectators call out the names of living persons, and as they do so, you write them down apparently on the slate, but really on the flap, as the flap now covers the slate. When you have five names down, give the spectators a flash of the names, but don't give them time to read any of the names.

You now state that you are going to verify the names. Call out the first name, and ask who gave it. When the person raises his hand, you say "That's right", and erase the name. Do the same with the second name. When you come to the third name, call out the name of the dead person that the spectator wrote, and not the one on the flap. When the spectator acknowledges it, say again "That's right" and erase the one on the flap. Then verify the other two, casually letting the audience see these two names as you verify them. The psychology of this procedure drives home the fact that you have not swapped slates, and that you erase all the names.

Place the slate back into the envelope, and with it a piece of chalk. Call attention to the mark showing through the window. After a few seconds ask the spectator to tell the audience the name of the dead person. When he has called it out, remove the slate, and show that the name has been re-

written by the spirits, and ask the spectator if the name is not written in his own handwriting, passing the slate to him to examine to his heart's content.

Here, we believe, is an effect which, in itself, is sufficient reason for the existence of the manuscript. Let us consider its advantages. First, it is one of the very few Living and Dead mysteries that can be appreciated by the whole audience. Secondly, it has a climax in the visible appearance of the name, whereas most Living and Dead mysteries lack a real climax, and third, any person with his old slate outfit, a couple of envelopes, and a small can of paint can make up the effect without additional expense.



ANOTHER METHOD

Here is a method which may be used by anyone possessing a "Miracle Slate". The slate is shown in the accompanying diagram.

EFFECT:- The effect is much the same as in the preceding experiment, but the slate cannot be passed for examination, and no envelope is required in the method. This is a good

effect to use when playing return dates with the Miracle Slate.

PREPARATION:- Write the name of a dead person in the middle space as shown in the figure, and cover it with the swinging flap.

METHOD:- Have a spectator write the name of the dead person on the flap directly over the name written on the slate. Before writing down the names of the living persons, secretly turn the flap over, and then write down the names of the living persons. Follow the verification procedure as before, and after erasing all the names, turn the flap back, and the dead person's name will have reappeared.

THE BIRTH OF OLD GLORY

EFFECT:- The performer shows a slate and an envelope, passing the envelope for examination while he rubs a layer of red chalk over the surface of the slate. He then rubs on top of this a layer of white chalk, and finally a layer of blue. He then has a spectator mark the other side of the slate for identification, and places the slate in the envelope with the mark toward the window. In a few moments, he removes the slate, and the colors are found to have rearranged themselves

to form an American flag, and the slate is passed for examination.

PREPARATION:- The requisites are: A window envelope, a slate, and a flap backed with paper as in the "Window Envelope". On the slate, draw an American flag in colors. Over the drawing, lay the flap, paper side down, and the slate appears blank.

METHOD:- Show the slate, and pass the envelope for examination. With the red chalk, rub the flap, then on top of this rub a layer of white chalk, and then a layer of blue. Then have a spectator mark the other side for identification with a piece of white chalk. Place the slate in the envelope with the mark toward the window. After a few seconds, remove the slate, leaving the flap behind, and the colors will seem to have rearranged themselves into a flag.

If desired, two slates may be used for the effect, and the envelope will be unnecessary, since the flap can be gotten rid of as in the old method.

A POLYCHROMATIC PHANTASY

EFFECT:- The performer shows a slate and a window envelope. He has the slate marked for identification, and places it in

the envelope with a piece of white chalk. When he removes the slate, a landscape is found to be drawn in white outline. He then replaces the slate in the envelope with a piece of red chalk. When he removes it again, the red parts of the scene are found to be filled in with red chalk. The slate is replaced and a piece of green chalk is dropped in with it. When it is removed the third time, the rest of the parts are found to be colored in green, and the slate is passed for examination.

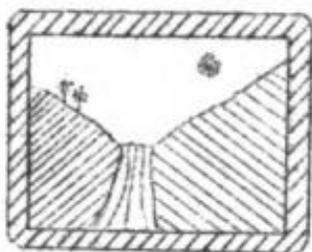


Fig 1

PREPARATION:- A window envelope, one slate and three flaps are needed, two of the flaps being backed with paper, and the third being left unprepared. On the slate, a scene is drawn in red, white, and green. On one of the flaps backed with paper, the same scene is drawn without the green as indicated in figure 2, and the flap is laid in the slate, paper side down. The unprepared

flap is laid over this scene. On the third flap, the same scene is drawn, but with the white parts only. This flap is placed in the envelope, with the paper side toward the window. A tab is glued on each of the flaps backed with paper, as explained under the "Television Slate". Three pieces of chalk, red, white, and green are needed.

METHOD:- Show the slate to be blank, have it marked on the unprepared side for identification, and lay it on the table, flap side down, and then show the envelope. In picking up the slate from the table, the outermost flap is left behind, this manipulation being simplified by holding the tab. Taking care not to let the spectators see the flap side since it now contains a picture, the slate is placed in the envelope between the window and the flap already in the envelope, a piece of white chalk being dropped in at the same time. When the slate is removed a few seconds later, this latter flap is removed with it, and the scene outlined in white has appeared. The slate is then replaced in the envelope with a piece of red chalk. When the slate is removed again the outermost flap is left behind, and the scene in red and white appears. The slate is again replaced in the envelope with a piece of green chalk, and when removed this time, both flaps are left behind, and the scene appears in red, white and green. It may then be passed for examination. The envelope, of course, appears to be empty, due to the paper on the back of the flaps. The landscape in the figures has been, of necessity, made simple. However, the design used is left up to the performer's individual taste.

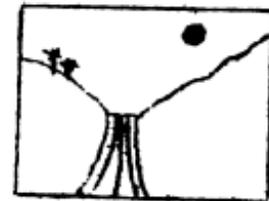


Fig 2.

A MASTER MOVE WITH SLATES

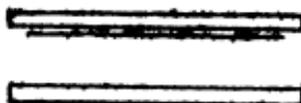


Fig 1

METHOD:- This is a very clever and useful way of shifting the flap. It has been used for years by mediums, and with whom we may credit it, we cannot say.

Let us assume that you have a message on the upper side of the top slate, covered with a flap. Show the upper slate on both sides, and then turn it over so that

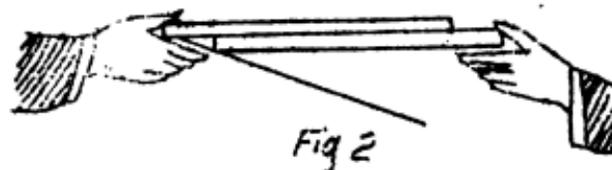


Fig 2

the flap side is down as shown in figure 1. Hold the slate with the flap side down in one hand, and show the other slate on both sides with the other hand. The slates are now placed together again, but in placing them together, the master move is performed. The flap slate is placed above the other, and in sliding them together, the flap is allowed to separate from its slate as shown in figure 2, forming

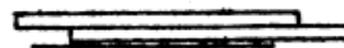


Fig 3

a V. The other slate is brought into the V as shown in figure 2, thus bringing the flap to the bottom side of the bottom slate, as shown in figure 3. The slates are then slid together as in figure 4, so that the slates are even, and the flap very naturally finds its way into the position on the bottom slate. The message is now between the two slates, and the flap is out of the way.

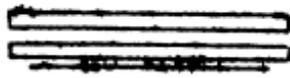
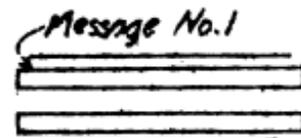


Fig 4.



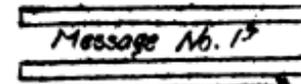
Message No. 2

Fig. 1

TWO MESSAGES WITH ONE FLAP

EFFECT:- This is a method of producing a message on each of two slates by the use of one flap. It is dependent upon the "Master Move" principle.

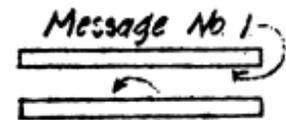
PREPARATION:- Write a message on a slate, turn it face down, then write a message on the other slate, cover it with a flap, and place it, flap side up, on the other slate. The position is shown in figure 1.



Message No. 1

Message No. 2

Fig. 2.

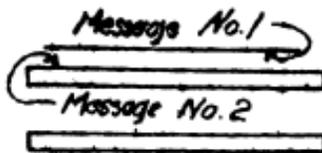


Message No. 1

Message No. 2

Fig. 3.

METHOD:- Pick up the two slates together, remove the top slate, showing it to be blank on both sides. After showing it, leave it flap side down, and slide it onto the top of the other slate, at the same time performing the "Master Move". Now the slates are in the position shown in figure 2. Slide off the bottom slate, which can now be shown on both sides since the flap covers the message. After showing them thus, place the slates together again so that they again assume the position shown in figure 2. In laying down the slates, the flap is gotten rid of on the table. As an excuse for laying down the slates, you may exhibit a piece of tape.



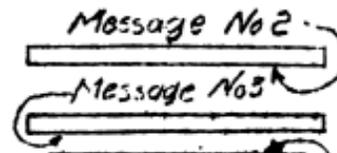
Message No. 1

Message No. 2

Message No. 3

Fig 1

Pick up the slates again, and tie them together with the tape, and in tying them together, give the bottom one a half twist as shown in figure 3, and both messages will be between the slates. The slates, being tied together, may be given to someone to hold on to.



Message No. 2

Message No. 3

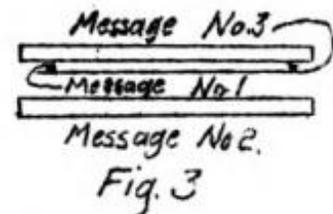
Message No. 1

Fig. 2

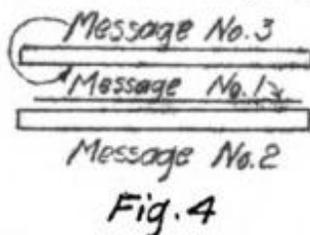
TRIPLE MESSAGE WITH ONE FLAP

EFFECT:- Three messages appear on two slates with one flap.

PREPARATION:- A message is written on a slate, which is laid face down on the table. Another message is written on another slate, which is placed, message up, on top of the other slate. A third message is written on the flap which is placed message down on the uppermost slate. Figure 1 shows setup.



METHOD:- Follow the method outlined in the section on "Two Messages With One Flap" up to the point where the flap is on the bottommost slate. The position is then as shown in Figure 2. You will have shown the upper slate, and you can now show the lower one since it appears to be blank. Now slide the bottom slate off and place it over the other so that the slates assume the position shown in figure 3. The flap naturally falls down onto the lower slate when they are placed together so that they take the



position shown in figure 4. When the slates are separated, there will be a message on the bottom of the bottom slate, one on the top of the bottom slate (really on the flap) and a third on the bottom of the upper slate. The two effects in this section and the preceding one show what can be done with the Master Move, but

its possibilities are really exceptional in all fields of slate manipulation.

THE MIRACLE SLATE

EFFECT:- The effect is the same as that in all Miracle Slates, i.e., the performer correctly predicts the sum of four numbers which are to be written down by the spectators. The great advantage in this method is that the slate used is not faked in any way.

PREPARATION:- A slate is painted with white lines exactly as in the Living and Dead Test. The flap is also painted with white lines, but in this case, it is only four spaces long instead of five as in the Living and Dead Test. A stack of large envelopes, about the size of the slate, and some cards which just fit the envelopes, are required. On the back of the flap, a piece of paper of the same material as that in the envelopes glued. On the flap, four numbers of four figures are placed, added, and the sum memorized. The flap is then placed, paper side up on the pile of envelopes, and another envelope is placed on top.

METHOD:- The performer has one of the envelopes selected, forcing one of the bottom ones so that the top one won't be

chosen. While the slate is being passed for examination, he has the spectators think of numbers with four figures in them, pretending to read the minds of four of them. He places the sum on the card in selected envelope, seals the envelope, and gives it to the spectator to hold. He then takes back the slate, and has the four spectators write their numbers on the slate. He casually shifts one of the envelopes from the top of stack to the bottom of the stack, which he has held from the beginning, turns slate over, and placing it on the stack of envelopes, directly over the flap, which is almost invisible, due to the paper glued on the back, he has a spectator write his name on the back as a mark of identification. Apparently using the stack merely as a support to rest the slate on while the spectator is writing, this procedure really adds the flap. The flap now covers the numbers written by the spectators. Holding the slate, the magi now has another spectator add the numbers, and write the sum in the bottom space, the audience believing the numbers to be those written by spectators. Immediately after the addition, the slate is laid, number side down, on the envelopes, apparently so that the performer can show the identification mark, and by so doing, the flap is disposed of. Returning to his table to get an eraser, he lays down the envelopes. He has the numbers verified by the spectators, erasing each as verified. The card is now removed from the envelope by spectator, and the

predicted sum is shown to coincide with the actual sum. The slate is left in the hands of the spectators, since it is quite unprepared. Since all the numbers are erased except the sum, they cannot check up on you. In having the numbers written and added, it is best to choose spectators some distance from each other.

CHALLENGE SLATE, DISK AND RIBBON RELEASE



Fig. 1

EFFECT:- Three examined colored cardboard disks are threaded on a ribbon. Two slates, each with a small hole running through its center, are shown, and a slate is threaded on each side of the disks. While two spectators hold the ends of the ribbon, the disks fall free to the floor.

PREPARATION:- A duplicate set of disks is required. A small hole is drilled through the slates and flap as shown. One set of disks is placed on one of the slates and covered with the flap.

METHOD:- Passing the other three disks and ribbon for examination, performer shows the slates on both sides. The disks are threaded on the ribbon, and the slates are threaded on,

one on each side of the disks, being sure to keep the flap side toward the disks. The position is shown in figure 2. Now, by bringing the slates together, the flap is shifted to the other slate, covering the three disks on the ribbon. When the slates are parted, the disks fall to the floor free. The ribbon is pulled free, and passed for examination with the disks, the slates being shown blank.

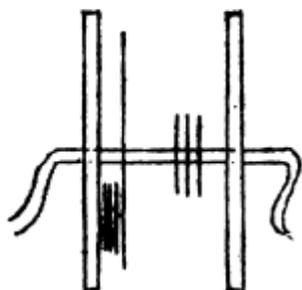


Fig 2.

EFFECT:- Three cards are selected, placed face up on one of a pair of slates, and covered with the other slate. The performer turns the cards face down by turning the slates over, and lifting the upper slate, he has one of the cards freely selected. Turning over the upper slate, the name of the selected card is found to be written on the slate.

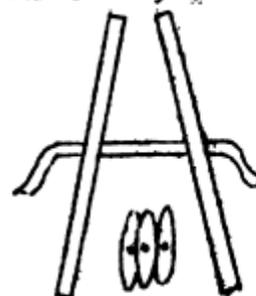


Fig 3

PREPARATION:- Four cards of like denomination are required. The name of the card is written across one of the slates. Three of the cards are then placed face up on

this slate and covered with the flap as shown in figure 1. The other card is placed on the bottom of the deck, ready for forcing.

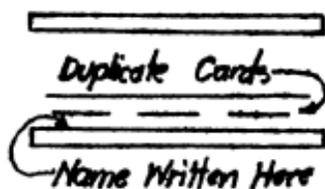


Fig 1.

METHOD:- Force the card on a spectator. If he refuses to take it, let him pick out another, and try to force it on another. If this force fails, state that you will also pick one out yourself, and remove the card.

If the force works on either spectator, simply have the third card selected also. You then show the slates on both sides, and taking the one with the flap, go down to the spectators with the cards. Have each person hand you the cards, and as they hand them to you, you place them face up on the flap, moving them around so that the spectators will lose track of the positions of the cards. Place the other slate over them, and turn the slates over stating that you will now turn the cards face down. The position at this time is shown in figure 2. Remove the upper slate, being careful not to let the audience see the under side as it contains the name. Have a spectator point to any card, emphasizing the "free choice". Of course, all the cards are alike, and he really hasn't much choice in the



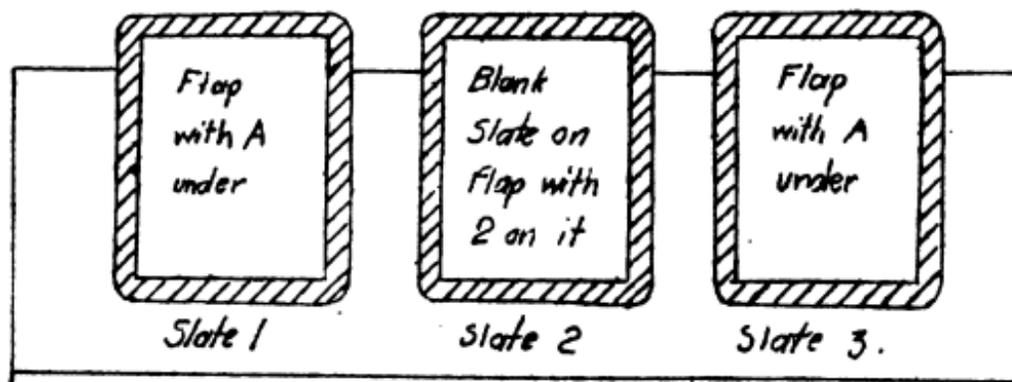
matter. The selected cards are out of sight under the flap. Have the spectator pick up the card he chose, and show it to the rest of the audience, then as a climax, show the name written on the slate by the spirits.

THE THREE CARD MONTE

EFFECT:- Three slates are shown, two of them are numbered with "twos" to represent deuces, and the third is lettered with an "A" to represent an ace. The slates are then turned writing side down, and slowly shifted, the spectators being requested to follow the ace. However, they are always wrong. The performer then picks up a slate which the audience knows to be a deuce, and states he will mark the ace (?) so that it can be followed. The spectators object, and always pick out either of the others. However, when the performer turns over the marked slate, it is found to be the ace after all. As a climax, the spectators call out any word, and it is written on one of the slates, yet the audience cannot pick out the slate with the word on it.

PREPARATION:- Three slates and three flaps are used. On each of two of the slates, an A is written, and a flap is placed over each A. The third slate is left blank, but a flap is laid on it and a 2 is written on the flap. It is placed with the 2 down on the table so that it overhangs the back edge of the table a little. The slate is then placed over it, and the other slates are placed, one on each side of it. The set-up is shown in the accompanying figure.

METHOD:- Show slate 1, write a 2 on its flap, and replace on



table, flap side up. Pick up slate 2, leaving flap on the table, show both sides, write an A on it, and replace, writing up, on the table. Show slate 3, and write a 2 on it. Now turn slates over beginning with slate 1, requesting the spectators to follow the ace. Each slate is left so that the flap overhangs the edge of the table. Slate 2 goes directly over its flap.

Now slowly transpose slates 1 and 2, then 2 and 3, and ask where the ace is. Naturally they will say it is one to the left, as seen from the figure. Pick up the slate with the flap covering it, and it looks like a 2. Either of the others may be shown to be the ace, by turning the slate over minus the flap. The slates can thus be moved around at liberty, and the ace can always be shown anywhere the performer pleases. The actual routine is left to the reader's own discretion.

Next, state that you will mark the ace so that it can be easily followed, pick up one of the slates which the spectators have just seen to be a deuce, and write "Ace" across the blank side. Again shift them slowly, and the spectators will choose either of those without the mark. After working up the sucker effect a bit, show the marked slate to really be an Ace.

For the final test, slates are turned writing down, one of them is picked up, and any name called out by a spectator is written across the number on the flap, the slate being replaced. This slate and another are transposed, moving only the slates, and not the flaps. When the audience endeavors to pick out the slate with the writing on it, they name the wrong slate, and by picking up the slate over the flap with the flap with name on it, the name is shown to be where it originally started. The actual moves with the slates in this part is also left to the discretion on the reader.

Throughout this description, we have assumed the performer to be working above the eye level of the spectators. However, where the spectators can see the table top, it is necessary to use a black topped table, or a black table cloth may be carried, and the trick worked on any table.

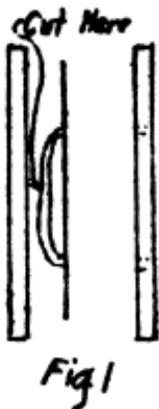
THE CUT AND RESTORED RIBBON MYSTERY

EFFECT:- A pair of slates with two holes through one of them are shown, and a piece of ribbon is threaded through the holes. The ribbon is then snipped, and a piece of ribbon is cut from each side of the cut. The slates are placed together, and when separated, the ribbon is found to be restored.

PREPARATION:- Two slates, one of them having two holes drilled through it as shown, a flap, the ribbon, and scissors are necessary. The flap has a piece of ribbon glued on it, the ends being glued where the holes would come with the flap on the slate. The flap is placed, ribbon side down on the unprepared slate, and the slate with the holes is placed on top. See Fig.1

METHOD:- Show the slates to be blank, and lay the flap slate on

the table, flap side up. Thread the ribbon through the holes as shown in figure 2. Place the slates together with the positions as shown in figure 2 while you get the scissors from the table. Then separate the slates, leaving the flap over the ribbon this time, so that the piece of ribbon glued on shows instead of the ribbon itself. Clip the ribbon as shown in figure 2, cutting only the one glued onto the slates. Trim the ribbon down on each side of the cut to get the superfluous ribbon out of the way. Place the slates together for a few seconds, and when you separate them, shift the flap to the other slate. The ribbon is found to be restored, and is pulled free from the slates, and given to the spectators as a souvenir.



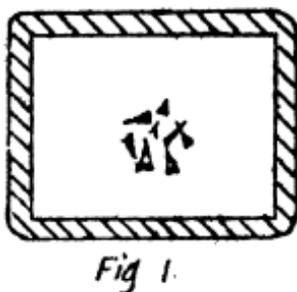
TEN MINUTES WITH THE SPIRIT SLATES

EFFECT:- Since this is a routine of several effects, we shall give the effects and methods together.

PREPARATION:- One slate, two flaps backed with paper, and a window envelope are needed. On one side of the slate draw a few Chinese characters as shown in



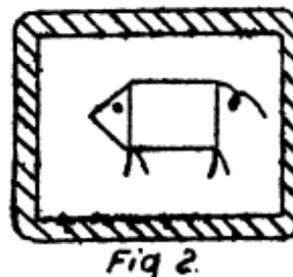
figure 1, and cover with a flap. On the other side draw a picture of a clock with the hands pointing to 12 o'clock, and cover with flap.



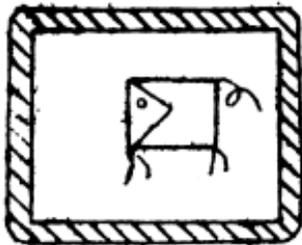
METHODS:- The slate is shown to be blank and placed in the envelope, with the Chinese characters away from the window. Explain that the slate used to be the property of an old Chinese magician, and that the answer to any question asked by a spectator will appear on the slate. A

spectator asks a question, and when the slate is removed, the answer is found- in Chinese! In removing the slate, the flap is left behind.

The performer then states he will illustrate a bedtime story, and says, "One day a little boy asked his father to draw a picture of a pig, and here is the result-". Draw the picture as shown in figure 2. "The boy said, 'But father, that doesn't look like a pig, it's square. Can't you make it look round?' The father being a magician, said, 'Sure!!' And changed a couple of lines- and the pig



looked round. "Change the lines necessary to give the picture in illustration 3, as you explain.



He states he will draw a soldier, a dog, going in a door in three lines, drawing the picture in figure 4. He then erases the figure, and pretends to draw a Scotch picture, really drawing nothing, shows the slate blank, saying that it is a street scene in Scotland on tag day. He then pretends to draw another, again leaving the slate blank, and explaining that it is a cow grazing in a pasture. "Where is the grass? The cow ate all the grass. Where is the cow? Oh, the cow has gone after more grass."

The slate is now turned over, and a picture of a clock is drawn, with the hands pointing to 12 o'clock. The slate is placed in the envelope with the clock away from the window. The time indicated on the slate is now forced on a spectator in any manner desired, and when the slate is removed, the flap is left behind, and it is seen that the hands have moved around to the selected time.



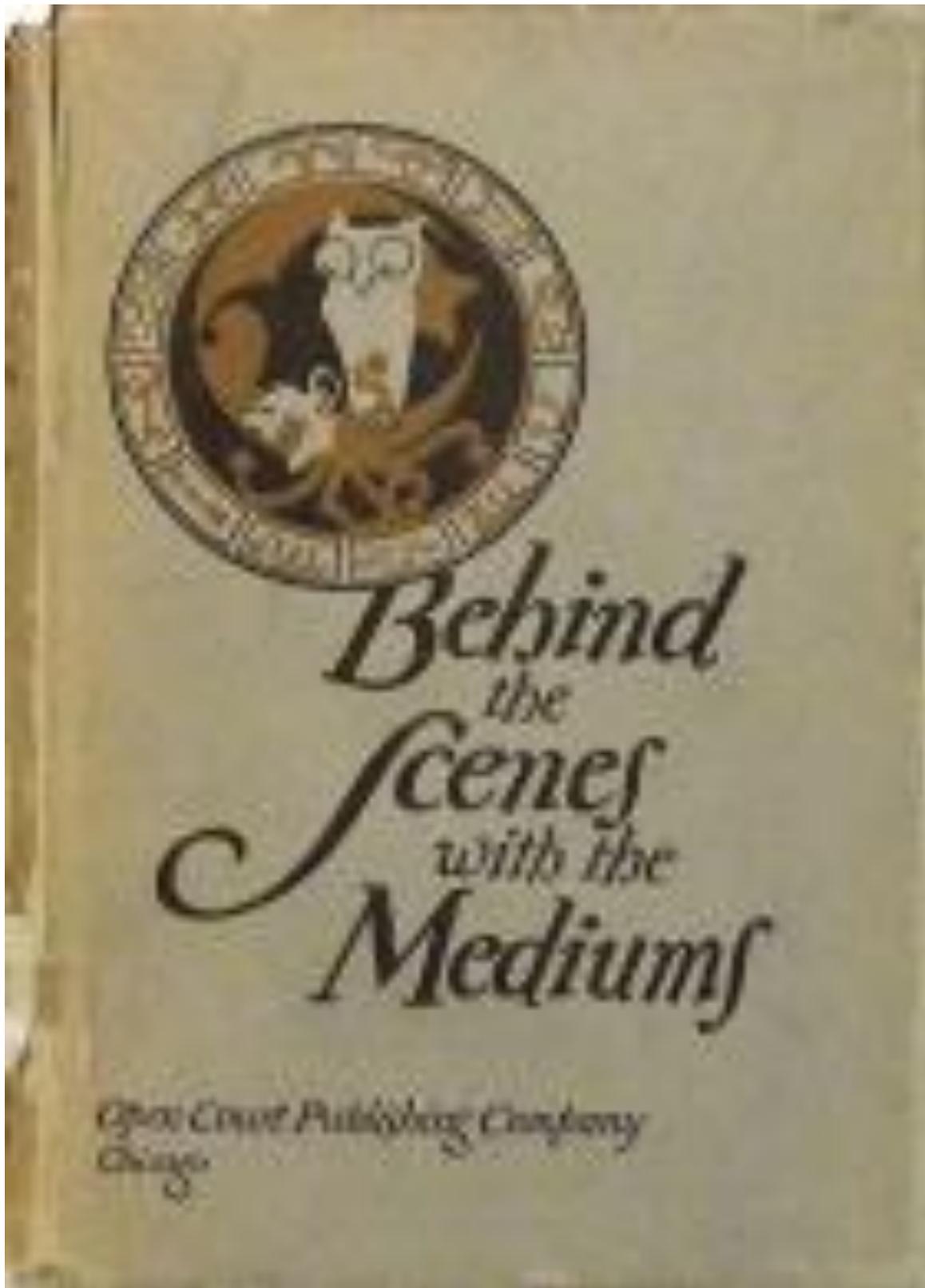
Errata:- The hands of the clock should point to the time to be forced, and not to 12 o'clock as stated in the preparation section on page 28.



Behind The Scenes WITH THE Mediums



DAVID P. ABBOTT



Editor Note:

Only the routines having to do with slate work have been included. The complete volume is available online through public domain search.

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David P. Abbott

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE MEDIUMS

By

David Phelps Abbott

I. HALF HOURS WITH MEDIUMS

PART 7

A Billet Test Using a Trick Envelope

A Spirit Message Written on a Slate, in the Sitter's Presence

Not so very long ago I met a friend--a man of wealth, who was a firm believer in spiritualism, and who frequently conversed with his dead wife and daughter. I asked him if he could inform me whether or not there were any good mediums in the city, as I should like to consult one.

He replied that at present there were none in Omaha of any well developed psychic powers; that he was entirely satisfied on the subject and did not require any demonstrations to convince himself of the truths of spiritual science. He informed me that the question was settled beyond all dispute; but that if I were skeptical, there was said to be a medium in Council Bluffs who possessed most wonderful powers.

I accordingly made other inquiries from those who were in a position to know; and I learned that this medium, a celebrated "Doctor of the Occult, Astrologer, Palmist and Spirit Medium," was at that time giving private sittings in Council Bluffs to earnest inquirers only, for the small sum of two dollars.

I was informed that his performances were of the most wonderful nature; that there was no possibility of trickery of any kind; that he told you whatever you desired to know, without your even asking him; that, in addition to this, he had powers over the elements of nature; and, in fact, I was led to believe that he was a true sorcerer of the olden days.

I determined at once to call on this renowned personage, and try to secure a little information from the unseen world. Accordingly, one Sunday afternoon I took the car that crossed the river, and in due time arrived at the apartments of this wonderful doctor.

I was met at the door by an attendant, who accepted the fee and directed me to enter the rooms of this mysterious person quietly; and if I found him employed, by no means to disturb him, but merely to await his pleasure; that he was frequently conversing with unseen beings, or deep in some astrological computation, and at such times it was not safe to disturb him.

With a beating heart I entered the room where he was to be found. This room was a large one. I did not see him at first. What attracted my attention was a large map or painting on a piece of canvas which hung on a wall space in the room. This painting had a representation of the sun in its center. This could be discovered by the rays which radiated from it in all directions. Around this sun were many stars, and an occasional planet, among which Saturn and its rings were very prominently depicted. There were numerous pictures of animals and men, and of queer monsters, scattered amongst the stars.

Beneath this picture stood a large golden oak table at which sat this delver into the occult, deeply engrossed in a study of this painting; while with a little brush he figured and calculated, in a queer sort of Chinese characters, which he drew on a sheet of paper. He also seemed to be making a strange drawing on the same paper. He was far too deeply engaged to notice my entrance, and continued at his labors for some time, while I stood quietly and watched him. Sitting on one end of this rather large table was a glass globe or vessel, supported by three nicked rods, something like a tripod. Coming from the wall was a rather large nicked tube or pipe which curved over above the glass vessel, and continually allowed drops of water to fall into the globe. From the side of this glass vessel there led a small nicked pipe which evidently carried away the waste water.

Occasionally a little blue flame would appear on the surface of this water, play about, and disappear. When this happened the body of the medium was always convulsed slightly.

After a time he seemed to finish his calculation, and this seer condescended to leave the realms of the stars wherein dwelt the spirits that rule the universe and the destinies of men, and to descend to earth and for a time direct his gaze towards this humble mortal. He turned around and observed me for the first time. He was a large, portly, fine-looking gentleman of middle age, with very long black hair which gave him a strange appearance. He wore a pair of glasses low down on his nose; and from over these he condescended to direct his gaze at, and to study me for a moment as a naturalist might study some specimen that happened temporarily to attract his notice.

He soon informed me that the stars had told him something of my coming and of the question that was worrying me; and he asked me if I desired to consult the stars as to my destiny, to have him decipher it from the lines of my palm, or whether I should prefer to converse with the dead. The last was my choice.

Not far from a window at one side of the room there was a small table on which were a few articles. He directed me to be seated at this table, and handed me a slip of paper of a size of probably four by five inches. He directed me to write the question I desired answered on this paper, and when through to fold the paper in halves three times with the writing inside. I did so while he walked to his bowl of water apparently paying no attention to me, and then returned.

When he had returned to a position opposite me at the table, he reached to take my writing out of my hand; seeing which I quickly bent down one corner of the paper and gave it to him. He directed one sharp glance at me as I did this, at the same time picking up an envelope from the table with his other hand. He held this envelope open flap side towards me, and slowly inserted my paper into it. As he did this, looking sharply at me, he remarked, "I am no sleight-of-hand performer. You see your question is actually in the envelope." This was the case; for it was close to me and I could plainly see the top of it against the back of the envelope, the lower portions being inserted; and I could see the little corner folded down, as I had bent it, and I was certain he had not exchanged it. In fact he took occasion to use his hands in such manner that I could see there was nothing concealed about them, that he "palmed" nothing, and that he made no exchange. I was entirely satisfied that all was fair, and that no exchange had been made.

Next, he sealed the envelope, and holding it towards the window, called my attention to the fact that as the envelope was partly transparent I could see my paper within it and that it was actually there. This was really the case. He now took a match, and lighting it applied the flame to this identical envelope without its leaving my sight; and proceeded to burn the last vestige of it and the paper within it, allowing the ashes to drop into a small vessel on the table.

There was no doubt that he did not exchange envelopes and that he burned it before my very eyes. He now took the ashes and emptied them into the bowl of water on the side table. A little blue flame appeared on the surface of the water after that for a moment, and then disappeared.

He now brought from a drawer a number of slates--about eight or ten small slates with padded edges. They were the smallest size of slates, I should judge;

and with them he brought another slate, a trifle larger, probably two inches both longer and wider. He requested me to examine thoroughly or to clean them all to my own satisfaction, and to stack the small ones on the table, one on top of the other; and when all were thus placed, to place the large slate on top of the stack.

While I was doing this he called to his attendant for a drink of water, and incidentally stepped into the hall to receive it, so that his menial would not profane this sanctuary with his presence.

Returning to the table he took a seat opposite me and placed one of my hands and one of his on top of the slates. In due time he took up the slates and we found nothing. He replaced them, and waited for a few moments; then seeming dissatisfied with conditions, he took up the top slate in his left hand and with his right hand began writing a message for me. He did this like mediums do automatic writing, with eyes half closed; and while writing his person was convulsed a few times. He then opened his eyes and read aloud what he had written, asking me if it answered my question. I replied that it did not, as it was entirely foreign to the subject. Then seeming dissatisfied, he moistened his fingers, erased the writing, and replaced the top slate on the stack of slates.

He now placed his hands on this slate again, and after a time examined it; but it was still free from writing. He lifted up some of the other slates; but as there was no writing, he scattered the slates around on the table and asked me to spread a large cloth over them which he handed to me. This I did, and under his direction placed my arms and hands over this. He walked to the bowl of water on the side table, and gazed into it. I watched him; and I saw a rather large flame appear on the surface of the water, dance about, and disappear.

He immediately informed me that he was certain that I now had a message. He remained at a distance while I examined the slates one by one. Finally, on one of them I found a message, neatly written and covering the entire slate. It read:

"Mrs. Piper is a genuine medium. She possesses powers of a very unusual nature. Her tests given Hyslop and others are genuine. Do not be a skeptic. You are making a mistake, dear friend. It is all plain to me now, and spirit is all there is.

Will."

Now, the question I had written was addressed to a very dear friend who is now dead, and read as follows:

"Will J--:

In regard to the medium, Mrs. Piper, of whom we conversed on your last visit, I would ask if she be genuine, and if the tests she gave Professor Hyslop and others were genuine. Give me a test."

This was all nicely done, and I am sure would have greatly impressed nearly every one. Being a performer myself, I could of course follow the performance in minute detail, and I am thus enabled to give to the readers of this paper a detailed account of the method used by the doctor. I will state that since that time I have very successfully operated this same test, minus the bowl of water and flame of fire; and that I can assure all that it is very practicable and that it is very deceptive.

When the medium picked up the envelope in which to place my paper, there was within it a duplicate piece of paper folded the same, and of the same size (one inch and a quarter by two inches) as the one I had folded. He kept the face of this envelope opposite me so I could not see that side of it. On the face of it was a horizontal slit cut with a knife. This slit was about two inches long and was situated about half way down the face of the envelope. The duplicate folded paper was placed vertically in the envelope at its center, so that its center was located against the slit. This piece of paper was held in position by a touch of paste at a point opposite the slit, which caused it to adhere to the inside of the back of the envelope.

When he picked up this prepared envelope with his left hand, he did so with the slit side or face in his palm next to the fingers of his left hand. This envelope lay slit side down before he picked it up; so that I did not see the face of the envelope at all, and he kept that side of the envelope from me during the entire trick. The paper within the envelope had been placed far enough down so that its top part was not exposed to my view. The envelope thus appeared perfectly natural, as an ordinary one with nothing in it.

He thus held the envelope in his left hand, flap open wide, with the back side of the envelope later to be sealed, facing me. Now he really inserted my paper in this envelope with his right hand as he took it from me; but in fact, he pushed it down just behind the hidden slip of paper within the envelope. I mean that he inserted it between the concealed slip and the face or slit side of

the envelope; and as he did this he caused the lower end of my slip of paper to pass through the slit in the center of the front of the envelope. The lower portion of my slip was thus out of the envelope on its rear side, between the front of the envelope and the fingers of his left hand; although I could see nothing of this. He pushed it down so that the top still remained in view with the bent corner exposed, and then sealed the flap over it.

Holding the envelope towards the window, he called to my notice the fact that my paper was within, and that I could see it plainly. I could see the shadow of the two papers, which appeared as one, and thus his statement seemed correct. Of course he did not show me the rear side or face of the envelope, with my paper protruding, which was immediately behind the duplicate, so that the shadow of it was also the shadow of the duplicate.

This shadow also hid from my view the shadow of the slit. The envelope was sealed fairly.

Now with his right hand he moved a small vessel on the table towards himself. Then taking the envelope in his right hand, slit side downward, he held it close to this vessel; at the same time with his left hand he took a match from his pocket and proceeded to burn the envelope. This move concealed the trick; and it was very deceiving and cleverly done. As he took the envelope from his left hand with his right hand, he, with his left fingers touching the protruding portion of my slip, caused it to remain in his left hand and to be drawn entirely out of the slit. His eyes followed the envelope as his right hand took it; which naturally caused my eyes to follow it, as his attention seemed centered on the envelope and it appeared to occupy the stage of action. This move was executed in a moment, not requiring any time worth mentioning, although it takes so long to describe it on paper intelligibly. Now while his eyes (and of course mine) followed the envelope, without pause his left hand went into his left pocket in a natural manner to get the match. He, of course, left my slip in his pocket with his surplus matches; and when he retired for the drink of water, he read my question.

As to the slate trick, all was fair until he picked up the top slate, wrote an automatic message, apparently read it aloud to me, and then upon my informing him that the message did not answer my question, he seemed dissatisfied, apparently erased the message, and replaced the large slate on top of the stack of slates. What he really did was to pick up the large top slate, bottom side towards himself, and at the same time to carry with it a small slate pressed tightly against its under side. He held the large slate with its under side tilted from me, so I could not see this small slate. There being so

many small slates in the stack, the temporary absence of one from the stack attracted no notice.

He kept this small slate next to him out of my view, and really wrote the message on the small slate which was next to him, and which was concealed from my view by the larger slate. He did not read aloud what he had actually written but merely pretended to do so, repeating something entirely foreign to the subject instead. What he had written really answered my question fully. When he appeared to erase the message, his movements were but a pretense; and he did not erase it at all. When he replaced the large slate on the stack of slates, he, of course, replaced the small one which was concealed under it, message side down.

It must be remembered that the operator, at the beginning of the slate trick, first took up and examined the large slate a time or so for a message; and finding none, seemed disappointed, and finally wrote the automatic message; then on being informed that it did not apply to the case, he seemed dissatisfied and appeared to erase it.

After the message was written and the slates replaced, he examined the top slate a time or so, and even lifted off a few small slates looking for writing, but did not turn them over; then seeing nothing, he scattered the slates around on the table, leaving their same sides downwards; and handing me the cover, he requested me to cover them and place my hands on them.

The trick was now practically done. As the slates had been examined so many times and nothing found on them, even after the automatic writing, the majority of persons would testify that there was positively nothing on the slates when the medium left the table. The majority of persons would never remember that he at one time wrote on the large slate and erased it. The message being on a small slate, and these being spread around, few would have known that this message really appeared on the particular small slate that was originally next the top of the stack.

Most people would have certified that they cleaned all of the slates themselves, that the medium never touched any of the small ones, and that he only laid his hands on top of the stack a few times. Some would even forget that the medium handled their writing at all before burning it.

I am sure that the nicked tube that carried the dripping water into the space over the glass bowl, had a second tube within it; through which his assistant from the adjoining room either blew, or sent by some mechanism, the

chemicals (probably potassium) that would take fire and burn on striking the water.

When I perform the slate trick described above, after writing the "automatic" message, apparently erasing it, and replacing the slates, I do not scatter the slates around on the table as this medium did. Instead, I proceed as I will now describe.

We place our palms on the stack, and after a time examine the large slate for a message, but find none. I may incidentally remark that this last examination unconsciously verifies in the sitter's mind the fact that I actually erased what I wrote "automatically."

I now look on some of the smaller slates for a message, but find none. When I do this I do not turn these slates over and look on their under sides, but merely take off the top slate to see if there be a message on the upper surface of the one under it. I merely remark, "Well, there is nothing on that slate," indicating the second one from the top; and at the same time I drop the top slate (now in my hand) on the table beside the stack. I immediately take off the second slate and repeat this same performance, dropping it on top of the first one. I keep on with this performance until I have removed four or five of the slates, and have them stacked in a second stack beside the first one. Then seeming to grow discouraged, I remark, "I guess there is no message"; and I replace the second stack on the first stack. This places the message slate four or five slates down in the stack: as the bottom slate of the second stack, being the top slate of the original stack, is now the message slate.

I next up-edge the small slates and place a rubber band around them placing them in the sitter's lap. I, of course, place what was the top of the stack downwards when I do so. As the stack is on the side edges of the slates when I first up-edge them, I next bring them upon the end edges, while I put the band in place. It is now easy to place the stack of slates upon the sitter's lap with the top slate down and to attract no notice to this fact. This is because the position has been changed a time or so in placing the band on; and I then take the stack in my hands by the edges of the slates, and simply place what was the top side of the stack in the beginning, at the bottom.

In due time I tell the subject to make an examination for a message, and of course four or five slates down he finds a message on the upper surface of one of the slates.

This seems very miraculous, as the slates have been so repeatedly examined and nothing found. Finding the message on the upper surface of a middle slate, where but a moment before there was nothing, seems to be truly a marvel. The subject having cleaned and stacked these slates himself, and having seen them examined so many times, naturally feels impressed that the message comes by some super-human power.

I. HALF HOURS WITH MEDIUMS

PART 11

Tests Given in a Room in a Hotel

Slate-Writing on Slates Selected, Cleaned, and Held by Sitter

Test Wherein the Sitter's Own Slates are Used

Billet Work in Connection Therewith

The Prepared Table

At one time an acquaintance told me of a wonderful experience that he had with a certain medium. He had called at the hotel where the medium was stopping, and asked for a private reading. The medium, a very dignified gentleman, received him, and proceeded to give him a very interesting verbal reading. He told my acquaintance of many occurrences in his past life, of things that were worrying him, etc. Finally he brought out a number of slates and gave them to the sitter with the request that he select two of them and lay the remainder on the bed. The sitter also cleaned and thoroughly examined the slates, and under the direction of the medium held them on his own head. The medium merely touched the edges of the frames of the slates with the tips of his fingers, which the sitter particularly noticed contained absolutely nothing. In a few moments the sitter took the slates from his head, and separating them, found on the inside of one a lengthy message addressed to him by name, and signed by the name of his dead mother. The message was devoted to subjects which were at that time affecting the sitter's life, and which the medium could not previously have known as the sitter was a stranger to the medium.

This acquaintance of mine regarded this performance as entirely beyond the possibilities of trickery, and as positive proof of communion with the soul of his departed mother.

There was another told me of the same medium, and he stated to me that he had bought two slates and took them with him to the medium's parlors. That

these slates positively never left his hands, and yet he received a similar message.

Yet another told me of his marvelous experience with this same medium. When he entered the medium's parlor, he took his seat at a kind of large table or desk, and wrote on a slip of paper the question he wanted answered, and folded the same and placed it within his own pocket. As he did this the medium was engaged with a book at the opposite side of a large room. When he had finished, the medium began to give him a reading verbally. Finally he had the sitter select two slates and hold them on his own head; and in a few moments he received a message on the inside of one of the slates answering the question he had written, and giving additional information; and this was addressed to his name. This sitter paid five dollars for this reading.

Now, fortunately, I was personally acquainted with this marvelous medium and knew the exact means he employed in these tricks. The principle in each of the slate tests was the same. Had the spectator been a close observer he would have noticed that a large folding bed stood across the corner of the room, also that one side of the head of this bed did not reach the wall by two feet. Had he looked behind this bed he would have seen an assistant seated on a chair in his stocking feet, with a table, several slates, and some crayon pencils. He would also have noticed that the room was heavily carpeted.

During the time that the medium was giving the first sitter the verbal reading, the concealed assistant was writing the message on subjects which the medium adroitly hit upon in his conversation, and which he cunningly caused the sitter to admit and discuss with him. Naturally the sitter said many things which he forgot immediately; and the operator being very expert in this mental work, even secured his name in the conversation, by properly exciting the sitter in a certain description of an important event then in the process of occurring in his life. Of course the assistant, hearing all this information, was able to elaborate a message in which all this information was used to very telling advantage.

In his conversation, the operator, at the proper time, spoke certain words, which were a secret cue to the assistant to close the message and be ready.

Now when the sitter selected and cleaned the two slates and placed them together, the operator had him take a seat in a large, strong chair with the back towards the head of the folding bed. The operator now asked to touch the slate edges, during the trial for a message, with the tips of his fingers. When he did so, however, he really first grasped the edges of the ends of the slates

holding them together; and he told the sitter to let loose and bring his palms up under and beyond these slates, and to place his two palms against the surface of the slate which was nearest the medium.

The medium, it must be understood, was directly in front of the sitter with his arms extending forward towards the sitter, and his fingers grasping the ends of the slates by their frames. The sitter's arms were extended towards the medium, passing under the lower edge of the slates which were held edgewise in a vertical position, and his palms were pressed against the surface of the slate next to the medium. The sitter's palms thus faced himself, and the slates were held vertically in a position between his palms and his own face. They were supported at the ends by pressure from the medium's fingers on their edges. It is very important that the reader form a good mental picture of this, if he desires to understand the trick thoroughly.

Now while the sitter was releasing his hold on the slates and changing the position of his hands, the operator deftly slipped the slate that was next to the sitter up about one-half inch higher than the slate which the sitter's palms touched.

The operator now held the slates without grasping the edges, by merely pressing on the edges with his fingers, or squeezing his fingers against the edges of the slates. He now moved the slates upwards until above the sitter's head, then backwards until the edge of the forward slate rested on the sitter's head. The sitter's hands followed the slates with his palms remaining in contact with the front slate. The sitter naturally supposed that the slates both rested on his head; but really his head, and his hands also, only touched the forward slate.

The medium now began a very interesting talk to the sitter; and as his assistant quietly slipped out from behind the bed with the prepared slate, the medium's conversation became very animated and almost violent. He also applied most of the pressure of his fingers to the forward slate; and relaxing the pressure on the upper side of the edge of the rear slate, he allowed it to tilt back an inch at the top. The assistant took hold of it from behind the sitter, lifted it out and substituted the prepared slate in its place, immediately retiring behind the bed with the discarded slate. The medium now grew more calm; and bringing the slates forward from the head of the sitter into the sitter's lap, he placed his own palms on them for a time and then asked the sitter to examine them for a message. When the sitter remarked that he did not believe the writing was his mother's, the medium stated that his guide did the writing at the dictation of the sitter's mother.

In the second case I described, wherein the sitter purchased and brought his own slates with him, the same tactics were followed except that the assistant could not prepare the message in advance of the writing experiment. He, of course, gathered the information and had a rather short message mentally prepared. It took considerably more time to perform the trick, but the operator made it so interesting for the sitter that this was not noticed. The assistant had to slip out at the proper time, take the rear slate, retire and write the message, bring it back and replace it, and then again retire.

The sitter was positive that his own slates never left his touch; but the fact was that the rear one on his head did, and he overlooked the fact that he was for a time merely touching one slate. Of course he never dreamed of a third person in the room.

In the last case I described, the only additional thing was the means by which the assistant secured a copy of the question which the sitter wrote and concealed. This large desk or table the medium carried with him. One leg was hollow, and it stood over a hole in the floor. As the table was very heavy, no one ever moved it. The top was prepared by first covering it with a very thin piece of white silk, placing a carbon sheet on this; and then some thin, slick, black cloth was placed over all and this cloth was tacked in place.

Paper and pencils lay on the table. The medium directed the sitter to go to the table and write his question and sign his own name to it. As soon as he did so, the medium told him to place it in his pocket, and then called him to the center of the room and began the reading. Now a strong cord which ran under the floor from the assistant, and passed up the hollow leg of the table, was securely attached to the corner of the white silk on the table under the carbon sheet. Of course, at the proper time, the assistant drew in this piece of silk and read the carbon impression of the question the sitter had written. In this trick the sheet of carbon should be slightly larger than the silk and should be tacked to the table on the side opposite the hollow leg.

Another medium performed this slate trick in a slightly different but very effective manner. He usually did it as I shall now describe, when the sitter came with his own slates.

He gave the sitter a slip of paper on which to write his question and requested him after writing to retain it in his pocket. He next gave the sitter a large rubber band to fasten the two slates together. When this was done, he took

the slates in the tips of the fingers of his right hand, and placed them on the sitter's left shoulder just back of his range of vision; while with his left hand he grasped the sitter's two hands and looked into his eyes. He now gave the sitter an interesting verbal reading, after which he brought the slates into view and gave them to the sitter to unfasten and examine. When this was done, the sitter, greatly to his own mystification, found on the slates a lengthy message covering the two sides of the slates that were together, answering the question, and signed by the spirit to whom it had been addressed.

The secret was very simple. The slip of paper which the medium handed to the sitter had been previously rubbed on both sides with white spermaceti wax. This was done while the paper rested on a smooth surface. Some pressure was applied, and the paper well rubbed, until it was coated with the wax. This could not be detected by one inexperienced. The medium saw to it that the sitter placed this slip on his (the sitter's) own slate while writing. This left the question transferred to the slate with a slight coat of wax. This was hardly noticeable. Now the rubber band was put around the slates, and the medium placed them in the position described above. While he entertained the sitter properly with the verbal reading, his confederate slipped out and took the slates, leaving two others in their stead which the medium now allowed to rest on the sitter's shoulder.

The confederate took the slates behind the bed, opened them, dusted common talcum, or toilet powder on the slates, shook it around, and as the powder adhered to the wax, he read the question and name. He now cleaned the slates, wrote the message with soft crayon, closed the slates, slipped out behind the sitter and made the second exchange. A good powder to use in this experiment is dry white lead.

II. MEDIUMISTIC READING OF SEALED WRITINGS

PART 3

Reading the Writings Production of a Spirit Message

I am now ready to produce a spirit message for Lady Number Two, signed by the name which is written below her question on her concealed paper; and to read and answer her question.

I arrange a table just inside the back parlor, sidewise to the spectators, placing a chair on each side of the table and two slates on the table. I ask Lady Number Two to come forward, take the chair next the audience and to clean the slates. As she does this I seat myself at the opposite side of the table.

As soon as she cleans them, we place the slates under the table; and I ask her to hold them while I place my hands on the table top. In a few moments, under my instructions, she brings from under the table the slates, on which is a fine spirit message of philosophical import, to which is signed the dead person's name which she has written on the sheet of paper and which she still retains sealed. The effect of this upon her, and upon her friends who may have known this person, is very great; especially as it is some one of whom I have never heard. I have very frequently known some of the spectators, v ho happened to be acquainted with the person whose name is signed to the message, to identify the writing and sometimes to identify the language as that of the dead person.

I next, with some little effort, proceed mentally to read her question, minutely describing the writing, etc. I then ask her to bring out the envelope, exhibit the writing and verify my statements, which she does. I now proceed to answer her question; and if I have not previously done so, to answer the question of Lady Number One. Let us suppose the question asked is, "Will I ever be wealthy?" I first consult the "Mystic Oracle of the Crystal Spheres." I place on the table a highly polished crystal globe three inches in diameter, such as is used for experiments in "Crystal Gazing." This globe is supported by a bronze griffon. I have the lady gaze into the globe while I intently look into it from the opposite side. I then with solemnity inform her that she will never be wealthy but that she will be "well-to-do."

I assure my readers that the effect of this all is just as great as if I really performed by some occult power that which in reality I have but performed by trickery of the simplest kind. I would have no trouble in passing it off on the majority of my spectators as the work entirely of spirits. The experiments are so superior to those usually employed by mediums, that the audience is simply confounded. Also! there is abundant opportunity after reading the dead statesman's name, to call him up in the manner so common with mediums and give the audience an elaborate message from him, which will have much weight with them, owing to the manner in which his spirit has been summoned from the land of shadows. However, I will say that while I use these things in the manner outlined, after all is over I assure my audience that it is not spirit power which I use; but I do not tell them it is trickery, as that

would detract from the effect. I simply let them speculate and think what they please; and I not infrequently find them determined, notwithstanding my statement to the contrary, to believe that it is the work of spirits, or else some occult power which I possess. I have had intelligent and wealthy business men of Omaha and other places question me, afterwards, about the apparently marvelous power which they seem to think I possess.

At one time I gave to the sisters of a Catholic school, or convent, one of my entertainments. I had the Mother Superior write and seal the great man's name. The name she wrote was "Hannibal," which of course I read for them very successfully. I was some time afterwards informed, privately, that one of the sisters ever after insisted that I was in league with His Satanic Majesty. This was notwithstanding the fact that in this particular instance I had assured them that it was nothing but trickery. I knew the teachings of the Roman Church in regard to anything like sorcery, or necromancy, or even modern spiritualism; and not desiring to give offense, I stated in advance that I was merely illustrating what might be done by trickery and how good people might be imposed upon by impostors. I stated that such things were never done by spirit power; and the Mother Superior remarked that she was sure, if spirits did such things, they were only "evil spirits." In this case I only gave the single reading of the statesman's name as described above. I do not know what would have been the result, had I performed the complete combination experiment, with all the dramatic play I usually employ.

The description given above is the exact appearance of the experiments as seen by the audience. This is exactly what the spectators see or think they see; and it is all that any of them do see. However, things are not always just what they appear to be.

When I have the writer turn the card over on the slate towards himself and not towards the spectators, this is in reality to insure having the writing right side up when I afterwards pass the moistener over the envelope. I present the envelope to him open, flap side towards himself, face downward, and hold it until he has started the card into it. When I ask permission to merely touch the card on its way into the envelope with the tip of my finger, I do this to insure the card going into the envelope with writing towards the front side. When I afterwards pick up the envelope I notice which is the flap he has just sealed, and I have this flap uppermost. This brings the writing right side up in my hand, and saves the time necessary to turn the envelope when reading it.

I furnish the writer with a large-leaded soft pencil, not too sharp, to write with, though any pencil will do. However, a pencil of above description makes the writing plainer and in a larger hand, which is of considerable assistance in reading the writing so quickly. The reader will remember, that I also request the writer to write the name in a bold hand plainly.

Should one reach the table before succeeding in reading the name, it were better to make a slight pause than to fail with the trick. However, after a few trials this will never happen.

Immediately after leaning the envelope against the skull, I return to the front parlor and proceed with the readings as given in the description of the appearance of the experiments.

While considerable time is required to read this chapter, much less time is required in giving the readings. Only fifteen or twenty minutes is required for the entire combination experiment.

The principle of using odorless alcohol on a sponge has been published before, but as heretofore described I have never found the trick practicable. As furnished by the vendor, the instructions are for the performer to have several of these envelopes prepared by himself or his assistant; and to have them placed flat on a table, at which the performer seats himself. He now partly closes his eyes; but in reality he can see the envelopes all the time. Then he slowly passes the hand with the sponge over the different envelopes, reading aloud the writing therein. It is intended to convey the idea to spectators that by passing the hand over the envelopes the performer gets en rapport with them. This method is obviously for the stage only, as in a parlor the spectators could see the effect of the alcohol. I have never found this method very practicable; and I assure my readers that in the method I have described less time is taken up and a much finer effect obtained. It is also much more certain of success, and leaves the spectators absolutely in the dark as to the method employed.

I have frequently performed these readings in audiences where are persons who have seen me perform them before; and in such cases they invariably inform me that they are more mystified than they were in the first place.

The secrets of the remaining experiments, so far as I know, have never been given to the public. The principle that is used in the production of each of them is entirely different; therefore, if a spectator should ever surmise the principle used in one of them, the moment he should try to explain the others

by it, he would see that it would not work; and he would conclude that he was entirely wrong.

And now in regard to the principle which I use in reading the writing of Lady Number One, I am sorry to say I must here disappoint my reader. I am under a promise to the dealer not to reveal this secret and can not do so. Those who desire to use it, however, can obtain it from George L. Williams & Co., 7145 Champlain Ave., Chicago, Ill. I regard this as one of the best tricks extant, and regret my inability to give its secret to my readers.

After the preparation of the writing for Lady Number One, I immediately go ahead with the preparation of the writing for Lady Number Two. I will now give the secret of this reading as completely as my promise permits me to do.

In this experiment the secret lies in getting an impression of the writing, but not a carbon impression. This impression can not be seen by the eye at all, but has to be "developed" afterwards. This is really a very fine idea and was originally intended for professional mediums to use in tests with their subjects at private sittings. The tablet is apparently unprepared and would stand the most thorough inspection, yet there is a preparation.

I will first describe the preparation of the tablet, and then I will describe how I obtain possession of it and how I develop the writing.

I use for this experiment a finely finished and highly glazed paper. I take one sheet of it and prepare one side of it by rubbing it over thoroughly with a material common enough to be within every one's reach; but the vendor of tricks might deem it a violation of my promise if I were to give its name, although the secret to this part of the trick has been well known for some time, and has even been published. It leaves a perfectly smooth surface. Only one in the secret could discover that there is a preparation. Even I am frequently puzzled to tell which is the prepared side, and can only do so by holding it so that the light strikes it at the proper angle.

This sheet is now to be placed on the tablet, prepared side down; but, before doing so, I first touch the two corners of the two top sheets of paper on the tablet with library paste. I do this so that they will adhere to each other a trifle, as this prevents the lady from tearing off by accident the sheet which bears the record, when afterwards she tears off the prepared sheet bearing her question.

I now place the prepared sheet in position, prepared side down, and paste the top in position with white library paste. However, I allow this sheet to protrude at the bottom about one-thirty-second of an inch. This is to make it so easy for the lady to get hold of it, that she will be in no danger of tearing off more than the one. Of course, when she writes, the writing is transferred to the second sheet, but it is entirely invisible.

After she has written, I direct her to lay the tablet on a table which is convenient; and it apparently lies there throughout the evening. This is the point where I begin the preparation of the writing of the statesman's name, immediately thereafter giving the first two readings. I only after the first two readings obtain possession of this tablet and develop the writing.

I do it in this manner. I bring forward two slates, which I shall soon use in the slate writing experiment, and leave them on the center table in the front parlor. Under one is a duplicate tablet, which I also leave on the table, unnoticed by the spectators. I remove the slates used in the dictionary trick, carrying away under one of them the original tablet. Meanwhile, the spectators are deeply engaged in a discussion of the two readings I have just given them; and I inform Lady Number Two that I will read her question a little later, and for her to keep it in her possession until I have done so.

I now go to other apartments for a few moments to develop the record. I use for a holder for the sheet of paper while working with it, the frame of a slate of proper size with the slate portion removed. I fasten the sheet in position on this frame with a couple of pins, using care to keep the side with the record on it upwards; because if it gets turned over, I can in no way discover the fact until it is too late.

The writing may be developed in several ways; the best way and the one I generally use, I can not reveal on account of my promise of secrecy to the firm before referred to. I will, however, give a method which is well known to many mediums, and which has been used by them for a number of years.

I merely dust a little powdered plumbago, or a little lampblack on to the sheet of paper, shake it around and then turn it over a vessel and dust it off by striking the paper very lightly with my finger nail. The writing will appear on the sheet plainly and may be read. The method furnished by the above named firm, however, is much superior to this method.

I quickly memorize the question; and on a slate close at hand, where I have a message already prepared, I sign the name of the dead person. This slate is an

exact duplicate in appearance, of the two slates which were left on the table in the front parlor.

I now proceed to prepare the Spirit Slate experiment, and give the final reading; but before describing this, which is one of the finest slate tricks of which I know, I will give a little additional information relating to the last reading experiment.

I was told to use a tablet with every sheet prepared, but I first prepared only every alternate sheet and let the rest unprepared. This worked nicely; but as soon as the tablet was used a few times, I found that all the questions that had previously been written on the tablet were copied for several sheets down. This caused so many words to appear, that I was compelled to discard all prepared sheets, excepting one, as I have above described. A tablet could be prepared with two prepared sheets on top and an unprepared sheet between them. There would then be two impressions on unprepared sheets in the tablet, but it would be necessary to discard all these top sheets after each reading.

This trick, however, was originally intended for the use of professional mediums at private sittings with a single person. In such cases, after the sitter has written and sealed his question, he is directed to proceed to the mantel and clean and examine some slates. While he is doing so, the medium takes the tablet from the table and places the same quickly in a large pocket on the inside of his coat, taking therefrom and leaving on the table a duplicate. He then advances to the sitter and begins a lecture, when his doorbell rings. As his servant fails to answer the bell the medium excuses himself for a moment, and attends to the matter himself, engaging in a discussion with the servant while out, for not properly attending to the door. This he does within hearing of the sitter. Meanwhile he is rapidly developing and reading the record.

This method I never liked, as it requires the assistance of another person. I much prefer the method I have outlined.

And now for the Spirit Slate Message. I use three slates, but the spectators never see more than two of them at one time. I make an exchange of one of the slates, unknown to the sitter or spectators. The table is an ordinary one, and I do not conceal the prepared slate on the person. The secret lies in the chair I sit on. The slate is concealed under the seat on a shelf. Just above this shelf is

another shelf onto which I slip the unprepared slate when I make the exchange. These shelves can not be seen as the chair is one of the variety known as "box seat." One of the sides, the right one, can be raised up to admit the hand to the shelves. This side is hung on hinges at the top, but they can not be seen.

I prepare the chair as follows: I get a nicely finished, box seat, oak, dining chair. I remove the cane seat and replace it with a beautiful leather cobbler seat. This renders what is underneath invisible. I now, with a fine-tooth saw, neatly saw the ends of the box strip underneath the right side of the seat, where they enter the legs of the chair. I remove this strip, which is some two inches wide. It is too thick; so with a saw I split the piece lengthwise, from end to end, so as to leave it only about one-half inch thick. It remains, of course, full two inches wide, and I am careful not to mar the finish.

I hinge it back in place with three small hinges, at its top, so that I can raise and lower it like a trap door while sitting on the chair. By screwing the hinges on a mere trifle out of line, the strip will move stiffly and will remain in any position in which it may be left. I now place two, thin padded shelves under the seat, one above the other. These are concealed when the side piece is down, but when it is up they are of course visible and the right hand can easily reach them. As the strip is now so thin it offers no obstruction when up, to getting at the shelves and making the exchange of slates.

I have this chair in the room adjoining the back parlor. As soon as I have developed and read Lady Number Two's writing, I sign the message as stated before, and slip this prepared slate onto the bottom shelf of the chair, message side up. I lower the side piece and all is ready.

I next place an ordinary table sidewise to the spectators, but just inside the back parlor. There is a cover on this table which hangs down some six inches on the side next to the audience, and somewhat less on my side. I place the prepared chair with its right side towards the table, at the side of the table away from the spectators. I have in the front parlor another chair just like mine, except it is unprepared. I place this chair for the lady with its left side towards the table, and at the side of the table which faces the spectators.

I place on this table the two slates which I have previously placed on the table in the front parlor. I ask Lady Number Two to be seated at this table. This effectually conceals from her view and from the spectators, the portion of my person and the prepared chair that are below the table top. We thus both sit sidewise to the table, and face the same direction. I ask her to clean the slates;

and just as she is finishing the second slate, I take the first one in my right hand and apparently place it under the table.

Now I have just raised the trap of the chair while she was cleaning the first slate; so, as I bring this slate below the table top, I slip it on the top shelf of the chair silently, quickly drawing out the prepared slate in its place, and lowering the side piece of the chair. I immediately bring the prepared slate up under the table, requesting her at the same time to place her slate under the table with her right hand. Upon her doing so, I immediately ask her to take her other hand and hold my slate also. I instantly withdraw my right hand. This all requires but a moment and she has soon forgotten that I placed one of the slates under the table.

Sometimes I take a small slate pencil and quickly place it on the slates, instantly withdrawing my hand. I now place my hands on the table top, and gradually turn, facing the table. I call on the spectators to come forward and watch the experiment, and the trick is practically done.

At the proper time I direct the lady to bring out the slates, which she does, producing the message. After the effect of this is over, I mentally read her question on the slip of concealed paper; then I direct her to produce the envelope, open it and verify all. After this I bring forward the crystal globe and answer the questions as before described.

After all is completed, I take the cover off the table and turn it over to the view of the spectators, that they may see that there is no trickery, but that the table is an ordinary one. I also offer my person for examination that they may be convinced that nothing is concealed about me. I have never yet had any one suspect the innocent looking chair.

I have performed many experiments in magic and sleight-of-hand, and I have seen the best work of this class in the country; and I can conscientiously assure the readers of this work that I have never seen one experiment of this class, the effect of which could in any way begin to compare with the effect of the experiments I have just described. This is especially true among the more intelligent class of persons, who may regard the very best work in magic as but the result of practice; but who insist on regarding this as something else; as something at least bordering on the occult, and as something very rare.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 1

Introduction

I have decided to give to my readers a description and explanation of a few of the best slate-writing feats and billet tests that are being performed by mediums and conjurors of the present day. I will make no attempt at explaining a complete list of the many tricks of the kind, for should I do so it would require a large volume to contain it all.

There are certain dealers who supply secrets of this kind to mediums and others desiring them at what may be considered by some as a very high price. There are also books on the subject describing many such feats; but those that are really the best, have been pretty generally kept out of the books on the subject. Some can only be secured from the dealers, while some have been guarded by certain mediums so closely that I do not think the dealers have obtained the secrets yet.

The tricks to which I shall devote the most attention are the ones used by such mediums, and certain ones supplied by dealers, these being the ones I regard as the best and most deceptive of the kind.

The reader must understand that the most essential part of any trick is the psychological part. This consists in the operator absolutely controlling the subject's attention. This is termed, in the parlance of the profession, "misdirection." A thorough master of the art of misdirection has his subject entirely at his mercy. The subject sees only what the operator desires him to see, even though much of that which is hidden is performed before his very eyes.

I do not mean to convey the idea that the operator employs a power anything like hypnotism, but merely that he is an actor; that he directs the attention of the subject entirely by skillfully directing his own eyes, his own gestures, and his own attention, to the point where he desires the attention of his subject to be directed. Wherever the operator looks and points, there will the subject most certainly look if he be interested. It is possible then for the performer to execute with the other hand any maneuver he desires, entirely unseen by the subject; but he must in no way look at such action himself, or he will be instantly discovered.

A magician once remarked to me, "If I can only get your attention intently, an elephant can pass behind me and you will not see it." This may have been a

little strong, but not so much so as one who is not himself a performer might suppose. The attention is like the field of vision,-it can only be concentrated on one thing at a time.

If any one reports a slate-writing, where he took his own slates, did not let them go out of his hands, and allowed no one to touch them in any manner, he is surely mistaken if truthful. There has been something which occurred, and which he does not relate, for the simple fact that it escaped his attention at the time-something that to him seemed a mere incident, a little thing, an accident, or that he did not perceive at all; but that was really the vital point, as it concealed the trick. This is the verdict of all the reliable conjurers who have ever investigated the subject.

Conjurers are always looking for things of this kind; and if they hear of such a trick, immediately manage to see it if possible. They always see it with different eyes, than do other persons. This is simply because they are fitted by education to detect a trick. A conjurer is a specialist who is fitted to detect trickery.

We hear many tales of marvelous slate tricks, but can never find them. They are something like the wonderful stories we hear about "Indian Magic." We receive the latter at second or third hand, and far from the scenes where they occurred. When one of our magicians makes a journey to that country to see these things, he can not find them. He can only find a number of tricks that are really inferior to the tricks of our own performers at home. There is one little difference, however, and that is the setting given these tricks by the pretenses of the performer. In our country, the performer, unless he be a professional medium, claims only that it is trickery; while in that country, as a rule, the spectators are allowed to believe the performance genuine. This greatly enhances the effect of any trick.

Slate tricks, where the performer appears not to touch the slates, are by no means the best or most certain of success; but a good performer must be able to perform all kinds and to adjust himself to the conditions with which he is confronted.

I personally perform most of the tricks I am going to describe, and I assure the reader that the explanations are given very accurately; so that the reader can, if he so desire, reproduce the experiments. All the tricks given are thoroughly practicable, and can be successfully performed with a little practice.

In justice to myself I wish to state that I have always used these experiments for purposes of entertainment or instruction, and that I have never imposed on the credulity of any of my spectators. I have never laid any claims to mediumistic powers, but have always acknowledged that the experiments were pure trickery.

The reader must remember that when a trick is explained it immediately becomes commonplace, and that it is only the mystery of good tricks that lends a charm to them. To properly appreciate a good trick, one should by all means see it performed before reading the explanation, if it be possible to do so. When the explanation is read without seeing the trick performed, it is rarely held at its true value in the reader's estimation. I assure the reader that the tricks which follow appear very mysterious, and that they are the best of their kind in existence. The reader has only to give a few of them a careful trial to be convinced of this statement.

I would advise any one who desires to thoroughly understand these tricks, to read the explanation carefully, and to form a good mental picture of all the details of the performance.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 2

Message Produced on One of a Stack of Slates, First Method Method Using a Rug or Newspaper

I will first describe a very excellent slate trick which is being worked most successfully by a few professional mediums of the present day. This is performed with a number, usually eight, bound slates, of the size five by seven, and one large slate, size eight by eleven inches inside measure. This trick is very easy to perform and very deceptive. Any reader of this article can perform it successfully with a very few trials.

I generally have the subject take a seat near a small table, and I remain standing at his left side while I perform the trick. I first step to an adjoining room as soon as the spectator is seated and get the slates. I come forward with the slates arranged as follows: in my left hand and partly resting on my wrist and arm is the large slate with the small ones on top of it.

I present the top small slate to the subject for inspection and cleaning, if he so desire. When he is through with it, I take it in my right hand and place it on the table directly in front of him. I repeat this with each of the remaining small

slates, placing each one inspected on top of the others, thus forming a stack. I do not even up the edges of the slates, but leave the stack in a rough and unsymmetrical form. When the last small slate is in position, I bring the large slate in front of the subject, and giving him a pencil, request him to write on the large slate his name and the date of his birth. If he desires to examine the large slate before writing this, I allow him to do so. As soon as he has done the writing, I place the large slate in his lap and request him to hold it by the ends. I then take a large rubber band and snap it around the stack of small slates, after evening up the edges. I now place this stack of small slates in his lap on the large slate, and request him to place his palms on it.

After sufficient time has elapsed, I request him to examine the slates for a message. When he does so he finds a long "spirit" message written on one of the small slates, completely covering one side of it. The message is written with a soapstone pencil, and appears bright, and heavily written. It is addressed to him by name, and is frequently signed by the name of some departed friend whom I do not know.

This effect is secured by a very simple means. I use nine small slates instead of eight. I prepare the message in advance and sign it. The slate containing this message is underneath the large slate when I come forward with the slates. As I take my position at the left side of the spectator, and tilt the slates slightly towards him, the message slate can not be seen.

The subject naturally supposes that all of the small slates are on top of the large one; and when he has examined all of the small slates in view, and I have stacked them in front of him, he never dreams that under the large slate in my left hand is another small slate which he can not see.

I now bring this large slate into position right over the stack for an instant, with its front edge tilted downward and resting on the stack. I allow the small bound slate under the large one silently to drop upon the stack, and at the same time I take his attention by giving him a pencil with my right hand and requesting him to write on the large slate. I say, "Write your name, etc., right there," pointing with my right fingers to the center of the large slate. This takes his attention so that he does not notice the fact that the large slate pauses over the stack of small slates for a moment. In fact this is done in a natural manner, as if I were merely holding the large slate in that position to show him where to write, and he thinks nothing of it.

When the large slate is removed and placed in his lap, he does not notice that there is now one more slate in the stack, for the reason that where so many

slates are used the addition of an extra one can not be noticed unless the subject first count the slates. Of course counting is never mentioned. The small slate with the message on it has the message side downwards, so that the message can not be seen after it is dropped on the stack.

I always keep the slates in my left hand until they are inspected and stacked on the table, for the reason that if the slates be laid on the table the small one under the large one will make its presence known by preventing the large slate from touching the table. I allow the slates partly to rest on my arm until the weight is reduced so I can hold them in the hand, at which time I hold those which remain, in the left hand only. This enables me to press the concealed slate tightly against the lower side of the large slate.

As soon as the large slate is placed on the sitter's lap, I up-edge the stack of small slates so as to even them up. I take from the table a large rubber band and snap it around the stack. As the stack is on the side edges of the slates when I first up-edge them, I next bring them upon the end edges, while I put the band in place. It is now easy to place the stack of slates upon the large slate message slate down, and to attract no notice to this fact. This is because the position has been changed a time or so in placing the band on; and I then take the stack in my hands by the edges of the slates, and simply place what was the top side of the stack in the beginning, at the bottom. This way the spectator never suspects that the stack has been turned over; and when he does find his message he finds it on the bottom slate, and on its upper surface, which greatly heightens the effect. His memory is especially good about cleaning the bottom slate, and also about the upper surfaces of the slates being free from writing; as he could see them all on the upper surface as the stack was formed. The message thus appears as if it had come by magic, or some superhuman power.

The secret of success with this trick is perfect self-assurance. The operator must not act timid, but must perform the experiment himself and direct the sitter what to do. He thus makes his own conditions and must never act in any way backward or embarrassed, but perfectly at home in the performance of the experiment.

The means by which I obtain the name of the deceased friend of the spectator may be one of several, some of which I will describe further on.

There are a number of tricks performed where a stack of slates is used and an extra slate adroitly added to it, or else one of them exchanged for another.

There is also an improved form of this trick which I use. It is very superior and I will give it a little later. It requires a little more skill at one point, and also requires a knowledge of certain moves which I give in the trick described in Number 4 of this chapter. In Number 5, I will again refer to this trick, and give the improved method; as the reader will then have mastered the moves required for its production.

There is also another trick with a stack of slates which is very effective. In this trick no large slate is used. The message is prepared in advance on a small slate, and this slate is concealed on the floor under the end of a small rug behind the table. As the spectator cleans each slate, the operator takes it and places it on the rug directly over the concealed slate. When all of the slates are cleaned, the operator picks up the stack from the floor; and secretly inserting his fingers under the concealed slate beneath the rug, he draws it out and picks it up with the other slates.

The move is made so that it appears as if the operator merely picks up the slates on top of the rug, and the subject never suspects that a concealed one is drawn at the same time from under the rug. This concealed slate has the message side upwards, and the stack of slates are now evened up and laid on the chair; where, after holding the palms on them for a time, the subject examines them and finds the message.

Sometimes when I perform this trick I have the message slate on a table under a newspaper. When we take our seats at the table I remove the newspaper out of my way and lay it on the floor, a chair, or another table. I then lay the slates on the table to be cleaned. Of course I secretly remove the concealed slate under the newspaper when I remove it, and lay both on the floor, chair, or table.

As the spectator cleans the slates I stack them on this newspaper, and when I pick up the cleaned slates, I draw out the message slate as in the preceding trick.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 3

Message on One of a Stack of Slates, Second Method How to "Switch" or "Pass" the Slates

One other variation of the last trick is being worked at the present time by a very noted medium. The slates are placed in a stack on a small table directly in front of the sitter. He is requested to clean them one at a time. As he does so the operator, who stands at his left, takes the slates in his left hand, and stacks them on the left corner of the table.

There is a mantel just back of the operator and his subject, on which lies concealed behind some object a duplicate slate with a message on its under side. As soon as the fourth or fifth slate is cleaned and in place on the stack, the performer, who stands somewhat behind the subject, secretly takes the slate from the mantel with his right hand. Just as the sitter finishes cleaning the next slate the performer takes it from him with his left hand; but just before placing it on the stack he makes a pass, leaving this slate in his right hand and carrying away from his right hand the message slate. This pass can be executed instantly and is immediately followed by placing the message slate on the stack, message side down, with the left hand; while at the same instant the right hand returns the slate the sitter has just cleaned to the position on the mantel.

As soon as the stack is formed the medium up-edges the slates, evens them up, and slips a rubber band around them giving them into the sitter's lap to be held. The stack is turned as in the preceding tricks, and the effect on finding the message is just as great.

In regard to making the pass with the slates, the operator should partly face towards the sitter's chair and stand at the left side of the sitter, so that his right hand is far enough back to be out of the angle of vision of the sitter. The slates should be taken with the left hand and placed on the stack at the left. When the exchange is made, the left hand, on taking the slate from the subject, should move for the merest instant back of the range of his vision, meeting the right hand and making the exchange. It should do this and without pause place the message slate on the stack. The whole move should take but a fraction of a second, using about the same length of time that is used in placing the other slates in position. Some remark about the next slate to be cleaned, just at this instant, helps to divert the sitter's attention and make the exchange more undetectable.

I will now describe how to make the "switch" as well as I can without drawings, and any reader wishing to try these tricks should master this move thoroughly. It is used in the next trick which I am going to describe, and which is one of the very best of slate tricks.

The move is made in this manner: The slate in the left hand is taken between the thumb and index finger, and rests in a horizontal position on the side of the finger facing the thumb. The remaining fingers of the left hand do not touch the slate, but are below the index finger; so that they as well as the hand, form a right angle with the surface of the slate. The middle finger is spread apart from the index finger, thus forming with it an opening into which the slate from the right hand is to be slipped. The slate taken in the right hand is also taken in a similar position; but just the instant before making the pass, I always bring the index finger on top of the slate and hold the slate pressed between the index finger and the middle or large finger. I keep the right thumb elevated, or separated from the index finger, and bring the two hands together, passing the slate in the right hand below the slate in the left hand until the latter is directly over the former. The slate from the right hand enters between the index and second fingers of the left hand, which should immediately grasp it tightly; and the fingers of the right hand holding it should at the same time release their grasp on it.

The index finger of the right hand passes below the slate in the left hand when the above maneuver is made, and the right thumb passes over this slate. These should instantly grasp the left-hand slate while the left thumb and index finger release it. The hands should be instantly separated, the right now carrying away the slate held before in the left hand, and the left hand carrying away the slate held in the right hand. This move does not require over a tenth of a second and is very simple and easy to execute, if one will but try it. Without figures it requires some little description, but it is very simple nevertheless.

If any reader of this work will take two small padded slates and try this move for five minutes, constantly passing the slates from one hand to the other and back again, the "switch" can be made many times a minute; and in five minutes' practice the hands will do the work almost by reflex action, without looking at them at all, and the reader will then be able to execute the next trick which I will now describe.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 4

Message Produced When but Two Examined Slates are Used Some Expert Maneuvering and the Importance of the "Pass"

This trick depends upon the "switch" of slates described before. I tell my subject to take a seat near a small table, and meanwhile I have two slates in my hands as above described. The message is already prepared on the under side of the slate held in the left hand.

The message is written in such a manner that the left index finger does not erase it while holding the slate. I carelessly hand the spectator the slate in my right hand, with the request that he "examine this slate on both sides." I do not tell him what I intend doing in any manner; and although I hold the other slate in my left hand, I say nothing about intending to use it. I merely say to him, "Examine this slate, will you please?" Just at the instant that he is through with it, I take it from him with my right hand; and at that very instant I remark, "I must use a chair in this experiment." At the same time I direct my gaze to a chair on my right that is slightly out of reach, and say, "I will use that." The subject can not help glancing at the chair as I say this, and at that very instant the "switch" is made. I instantly hand him the slate in my left hand before getting the chair, saying, "examine that slate also." As I say this I lay the slate in my right hand on the table in front of but some distance away from him. This slate was the one before held by my left hand and the message is on its under surface. The slate the subject is examining is the same one he examined in the first place.

I quickly get the chair, keeping my eye on the subject to see that he gives his attention to the slate in his hands; and instantly taking my seat opposite him I quickly take the slate from him, saying, "I will now place this slate on top of this one." As I say this I lower his slate over the one on the table, and place my palms on my end of them requesting him to do the same at his end of them. All of this, which takes so long to describe, does not require a half minute to execute.

After a time I lift off the top slate and look for a message between them. I do not turn the top slate over, although there is nothing on its lower side, but I merely look on the upper surface of the lower slate. As I do this I have the top slate in my right hand by its right edge, and I have picked up the other by its left edge with my left hand, and raised it about an inch from the table. As I remark, "There is nothing on that slate," I bring the two slates again together. But this time I bring the slate in my right hand under the one in my left hand.

It is merely passed under it as I bring the hands together and this fact is not noticed by the spectator. In fact in the first place as I lift off the top slate with my right hand, my left grasps the lower slate so soon after the right hand grasps the top slate that the top slate is not more than an inch removed to the right, before the left hand has the lower slate and the two are separated; that is, the left hand moves to the left as much as the right hand does to the right, and neither hand is lifted more than an inch or two from the table.

I remark, "There is nothing on that slate," instantly passing the right slate under and the left slate over, bringing the hands together. If the move be made as just described, the subject will never notice that the slate that was the top one in the first place, is now the bottom one, and vice versa.

We replace the palms and wait a few moments, when again I separate the slates exactly as I did in the first place. The message is now on the under side of the upper slate, and can not be seen as I do not turn this slate over. I make the remark, "No message yet," as if surprised and dissatisfied; and I bring the two hands together again as in the first instance, except that this time I leave the message slate on top.

I do not place the slates on the table flat; but up-edge them instead, and pinch them tightly together with my left fingers; while with my right hand I take from my right vest pocket a small piece of slate pencil. I remark, "Perhaps if we had a pencil we would get something; and separating the slates the slightest bit at the top with my left hand, I drop the piece of pencil between them with my right hand, quickly closing the slight opening.

I now lay the slates flat on the table; but this time I lay them so that they are turned over, or so that the message slate is now underneath with the message on its upper surface. We instantly replace our palms on the upper slate. Now all of this maneuvering has been for the purpose of bringing the message slate to the bottom, message side upwards; and also for showing the sitter the upper surface of the lower slate repeatedly, and always free from writing. This greatly enhances the after effect of the trick. I, of course, do not tell him why I am thus maneuvering; in fact, he does not know I am maneuvering, and afterwards merely remembers my separating the slates and looking on the upper surface of the lower one repeatedly but finding nothing. As a result, when next we look at the slates, he is deeply impressed on finding a message where but an instant before there was none. I do not separate the slates this time myself, but merely remove my palms and ask him to examine them.

A subject's memory is so poor at recalling little details, that all he can remember afterwards is that he examined both of the slates, that they never left his sight, and that he repeatedly looked at them and saw no message; that finally, on separating them, he found a message where but an instant before there was none.

The reader at first sight might not give to all this maneuvering the proper importance, and might consider the trick performed when the slates are first examined and placed on the table; but I will say that this subsequent maneuvering is what makes this trick the superb effect which it is, and makes it really one of the best slate tricks for a single spectator.

The reader will please remember the moves just described which I execute after the exchange of the slates, and after I lay the slates on the table one on top of the other. These moves are the closing part of the trick which I will next describe, and which I made mention of in Number 2 of this chapter.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 5

Message Produced on One of Two Slates Selected from a Stack, Third Method, where the "Pass" and Some Expert Maneuvering are Introduced Production of a Message Written with a Gold Ring Belonging to the Sitter

I will now refer the reader to the trick described in Part 2 of this chapter wherein one large and nine small slates are used. In this trick I use the same slates but the modus operandi is somewhat changed.

I do not enter with the eight small slates on top of the large slate as in the trick described in Number 2; but I have the slates arranged after the following manner: The nine small slates are stacked one on the other, with the message slate on top, message side down. On top of this stack is the large slate.

I enter with these and place them on the table directly in front of the sitter. I stand at his left and with my left hand I remove the large slate from the stack, carrying under it secretly the top small slate. This small slate bears the message; so I tilt the top surface of the large slate towards the spectator so as to prevent his seeing the concealed slate, which my left fingers press tightly against the far side of the large slate. With my right hand I now give the sitter the stack of eight small slates, telling him to place them in his lap, clean them one at a time, and stack them on the table in front of himself.

As I thus direct him, my left hand still holds the large slate a few inches above the table top and a few inches farther from the subject than the position where I first placed the slates. I now state that while he cleans his slates, I will write on the large slate any mental impression which I may receive. I allow the lower edge of the large slate to rest on the table, and taking a pencil in my right hand I proceed to write some name. I try to write one that the sitter will recognize; but if unable to do so, it makes no difference. Meanwhile, I see to it that, while I am writing, the sitter continues to clean and stack the slates in front of himself.

I time my writing so as to finish the name just as he cleans and stacks the fourth slate. At this instant I bring the large slate directly in front of him (and right over the stack he is forming), and pointing to the name I have written I say: "Do you recognize that name?" This takes his attention; and at that instant I allow the concealed message slate behind the large one to secretly drop upon the stack from under the large slate. The large slate is resting with its forward edge on the front edge of the stack, and its rear edge elevated some thirty degrees, when I execute this maneuver.

The subject proceeds to read the name; and if he happens to recognize it, I give him a verbal reading while he continues to clean and stack the remaining slates. If he does not recognize the name, I instruct him to go ahead; as my "impressions do not seem to come readily, owing to improper conditions."

Just as he stacks the last slate, I take the stack in my hands like a pack of cards and spread them out quickly, fan-wise, just as a person playing cards does

the cards which he holds. I, however, keep them in a horizontal position near the table.

Now, if the message slate be the fifth one down from the top, I allow the fourth one to remain on top of it in such position that the edges of the two slates coincide. All of the slates are spread except these two, which accidentally(?) remain as if fastened together. I now with my fingers secretly push these two forward a good inch in advance of the other slates, and direct the sitter to "take two of these slates." As he starts to obey, I push these two right into his hands; and just as he draws them out, I remark, "Any two that you wish." I really "force" these two slates, just as a magician "forces" the selection of a desired card.

As the subject draws the two slates, I instantly tell him to lay them on the table, which he does. The message is on the under side of the lower slate, and I see to it that they are not turned over. I now close the trick with the same maneuvers I use in closing the foregoing trick which I described in the last number. The effect is beyond description; as the sitter thinks he has just cleaned all of the small slates, and that he of his own free will chooses two of them at random; that of these two, we repeatedly look on the upper surface of the lower one for a message, finding none; and then, suddenly, without these slates leaving his sight, he finds a message on the upper surface of the lower slate.

I know a medium who produces a message in this manner, which appears to be written with a gold ring worn by the sitter. The message is prepared in advance by rubbing a sheet of paper with spermaceti wax or paraffin. When the sheet is coated thoroughly, it is laid on a slate, prepared side down. The message is now written on this sheet of paper. The pencil passing over the paper causes the message to be transferred to the slate in wax writing. The medium now dusts bronze powder over the slate, shakes it around and dusts it off. The powder adheres to the wax, and the remainder of the slate is cleaned carefully of all loose powder.

With the slate thus prepared, the performer proceeds with the trick as described in this number; except instead of dropping-a piece of pencil between the two slates, he asks for the plain gold ring of the sitter, and drops it between them. The message appears rather dimly, written in gold, as if it had been traced by the ring. This trick always makes a great impression on a subject.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 6

To Secretly Read a Question Written on a Slate by a Sitter, when a Stack of Slates is Used

How to Secretly Obtain a Confession or Question, Written on Paper and Sealed by the Sitter when a Stack of Slates is Used

I will here describe a means of secretly reading a question written on a slate by a sitter. The performer uses a stack of nine small slates with one large one on top of them as in the preceding slate trick. The slates are brought in and placed on a low table in front of the sitter, and the operator takes his seat opposite him at the table.

The operator now takes up the large slate from the stack and secretly takes a small slate underneath it, as in the slate-writing trick. He keeps the small slate on the side of the large one next to himself. There is no message on any of the slates and they are all perfectly clean. The operator begins figuring in small figures, or hieroglyphics, on the upper portion of the large slate. This is a mere excuse for taking up the large slate.

As he does this he requests the sitter to take a small slate and write thereon such questions as he may desire answered and to sign his own name thereto. This the sitter does; and as he faces the operator and holds the slate in front of his face, vertically, the operator can not see his writing. While the subject writes his questions, the operator takes the stack of small slates with his right hand and places them in his lap. As he does this he retains the large slate in his other hand with the concealed small slate behind it.

When the subject has finished his writing, the operator directs him to place his slate face downward on the table. This he does. The operator now asks, "What was your birth month, please?" or some similar question, and appears to make some kind of a mark on his large slate. He then, with his other hand, takes the slate on the table which contains the questions on its lower side, and places it face downward on the stack in his lap without in any way looking at it. He now places the large slate on the stack, and places his palms on it for a moment while he gives a few verbal impressions to the sitter.

He now takes up the large top slate in one hand, but does not this time carry up a concealed slate behind it. The subject naturally supposes that the top slate of the small ones is the one bearing the questions; but it is not, for the reason that when the operator placed the large slate on the stack just after placing the question slate on it, he of course placed the concealed small slate on the stack at the same time. The question slate is therefore the second slate from the top instead of the top one.

The operator now lifts off the top small slate face downwards with the other hand, and places it on the table without looking at its under surface. The subject supposes that his questions are on its under surface, but they are instead on the under surface of the top small slate left on the stack.

The operator now places over the slate on the table a newspaper which is at hand, at the same time laying down on the stack in his lap the large slate in his other hand. He now requests the sitter to place his hand on top of the newspaper which rests on the slate that he supposes bears his questions. The operator requests him to close his hand tightly and allow his fist to rest on the

paper as "this makes the magnetism better." This prevents the subject from lifting up the slate and examining it, which sometimes happens if such precautions be not taken.

The operator now takes up the large slate again from the stack in his lap and appears to again figure in its top corner. He, of course, secretly carries up behind it the slate with the subject's questions on it. While appearing to figure, he quickly reads and memorizes these questions and names. He now asks the subject to remove his hand, and he quickly takes the small slate under the paper on the table and replaces it on the stack, at the same time placing the large slate in his other hand on top of it. This secretly places the question slate on top of all the small slates, just as it should be, and as the subject has supposed it to be all of the time.

The operator now asks some other question of the sitter, as, "What star were you born under?" or something of the kind and makes a few hieroglyphics on the large slate; and then he places the entire stack on the table, requesting the sitter to clean the slates. The sitter does so, and of course finds his questions on the under surface of the upper small slate as it should be.

The operator requests the subject not to let him see the writing, and now proceeds with the reading. He can give a fine verbal reading with the information he now possesses, or he can produce a message as I have before described wherein a stack of slates is used and the message written in the subject's presence.

It is thus easy for an expert performer to sit down to a table and have the subject write his questions in the operator's presence, to write the answers in the sitter's presence, to do all before his very eyes and yet not be detected in any of it as the secret is so subtle. Such performer must, however, be an actor and a master of the art of "misdirection."

There is another means of secretly securing knowledge of a subject's questions, or, as is sometimes done by mediums, of a confession of some secret thing which such subject has done, or in which he desires help, and yet is anxious to keep secret. Here a stack of small slates, with one large one, is again used.

In the latter case the medium informs the subject that he does not care to know what the subject may confess; but that it is necessary for him to write

out a full confession, giving all names, etc., if he desire spiritual aid. That, however, he is at perfect liberty to keep the confession entirely secret.

The subject is then given a slip of paper, or he may use his own; and he is directed to write out his confession, or questions, as the case may be, and to seal the same in an envelope lying on the table. While he is doing this the medium is sitting and writing on the large slate, as if busy with some matter of his own. He sits side-wise to the subject and does not appear to watch him.

When the subject has written as he is directed, the medium instructs him to seal his paper in the envelope and to lay it on top of the stack of small slates which are on the table in front of him. When he has done so, the medium places the large slate on top of the stack of small slates, and asks the sitter to write on this large slate the name of some dead relative. When this is done, the medium lifts the large slate off the stack, secretly carrying under it the top small slate. At the same time he asks the sitter if the name on the large slate be that of a dead relative.

Now, on the second small slate from the top, the medium has previously secretly placed a duplicate envelope with a sheet of paper in it; so that when the top slate is carried away secretly, under the large slate, and bearing on its upper surface between it and the large slate the envelope containing the writing of the sitter, this duplicate envelope on top of the remaining slates will appear to be the one the sitter has just sealed and placed there.

The operator usually has some paper and other loose objects on one end of the table, so that he can lay down the large slate with the concealed one under it; and so that the concealed slate will not make its presence known by preventing the large slate from touching the table, as would be the case were it laid flat on the table.

The operator now asks the subject to lay "his" envelope on the table to one side, and to select two of the slates. This he does, (really laying the duplicate to one side), and the medium now has the subject place his palms on these selected slates and try for a slate writing. He remarks that he does not feel quite right just now, and fears that he can not succeed, as conditions do not seem favorable. After a short trial and failure, he generally tells the subject that he will have to give up at present; but for him to return tomorrow or later in the day, and he will make a second effort, when conditions will doubtless be more favorable. He says, "Remember your questions (or confession)"; and reaching, he takes up the duplicate envelope which the subject thinks contains his writing, and says, "I will let you take this with you-no, I will not,

either; as that would not be right. I will just burn it up." Suiting the action to the word, he takes a match and burns the duplicate envelope and paper entirely to ashes, allowing the latter to fall on one of the slates. He now dismisses the subject, after making an appointment for a second trial.

As soon as the subject has departed, the medium lifts the large slate; and taking up the original envelope on top of the concealed small slate, he opens and reads the confession, or questions, as the case may be. He thoroughly memorizes all, and prepares a fine message, answering everything; so that when the subject returns, he will have all of his writing answered very completely.

The medium with whom I am acquainted, and who works this fine trick very frequently, generally has the subject depart and make a second visit as herein described; but if he prefer, he can, after failing to produce a message, and after burning the duplicate envelope, conduct his guest to some other apartment for some other experiment, and return later for a second trial for a message. In this case an assistant enters the room, reads the writing, and prepares the message during the absence of the medium and his guest.

If the medium have a dark chamber, he can have taken the subject into it for some dark sitting manifestations; as the absence of light-waves is very conducive to success with the "spirits," and is very helpful in "establishing favorable conditions and harmony." After some experiments here they return and again try for a slate writing; and this time the subject is thoroughly satisfied and convinced.

If when a sitter receive a slate writing from a dear one who is dead, he receive in addition thereto a token of love in the shape of a flower, a handkerchief of soft silk, or some other object, the performance has a very emotional effect on him; and such token is usually preserved throughout life. Now, in working any of these tricks using a stack of slates, if a larger number of small slates be used, such as twelve or more, two slates can be added or removed under the large slate instead of one, and will attract no notice if removed or added when a sufficient number are in the stack. These two may contain between them, in addition to the message, such flower or token as the medium may desire.

If the performer be able deftly to hold the token against the lower side of the concealed small slate, and adroitly to insert it, he need not have more than one small slate under the large one.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 7

Message Produced on a Slate Cleaned and Held Under a Table by a Sitter

There is a trick wherein but two slates are used that is very effective. I will give the explanation and effect together in this case.

I have the message prepared on one of the slates, and I use a small center table such as has a shelf attached to the legs about a foot above the floor. I lean the prepared slate on the floor against this shelf, and out of view on the side of the table opposite where the subject is to sit. I have a chair near the same side of the table where I will later take my seat.

On the center of the table a number of newspapers lie carelessly. I place a chair near the side of the table where I desire the spectator to sit. I now seat him on this chair and stepping to a drawer, I bring him a small slate with bound edges; one that looks just like the one containing the message. I ask him to thoroughly examine or clean it; and as he does so I seat myself at the opposite side of the table. I now request him to place his slate flat on the table, and to place his palms on it. I then request him to rest his face on his hands while they lie on the slate for a half minute, and to close his eyes and make his mind passive while so doing.

While he does this I secretly reach to the floor, lift the message slate and lay it flat on my knees under the table, message side up. I now place my palms on the table and in a few moments ask the subject to examine his slate for a message. He, of course, finds none; and I seem disappointed at this, but request him to hold it for a time on the table and try again. This all lends an air of great honesty to the performance and tends to throw the subject off his guard. On examining the slate again he finds nothing, so I take the slate from his hands and examine it to see if there actually be no sign of writing. Finding nothing, I place the slate under the table near the center, with my right hand, in a rather hurried manner; and I request him to reach his right hand under the table and grasp the slate and to press it to the table above it. I tell him to leave his left palm on the table; and I take his attention sufficiently in telling him how to place his left palm on the table, that it prevents him from looking under the table in any manner. I immediately bring out my right hand, leaving him holding the slate with his one hand.

I suppose that it is hardly necessary to state that as I lower my right hand with the examined slate below the table, I leave this slate on my lap and

instantly, without pause, carry up under the table the prepared slate which is on my knees.

Now, that the subject is holding the message slate in proper position with his other palm on top of the table, I make a move as if to place my right hand on the center of the table. Meanwhile my left hand has dropped out of sight, apparently, by my side. I seem annoyed by the newspapers in the center of the table, and remark, "I will clear these out of the way." As I say this I take a number of them in my right hand and pass them to my left hand, which comes up near the height of the table top to meet my right; but it secretly contains the slate which was left on my lap. The papers in my right hand are moved towards my left hand so as to conceal this slate, and my left hand grasps them on top of the slate which it contains. The left hand should not be high enough for the back edge of the slate to be in view of the sitter, until after the papers are passed over it and grasped on top of the slate. As I make this move I am rising from the chair; and with my right hand I pick up the remaining papers and pass them also to my left hand, but this time I pass them underneath the others; so that the slate is now between the papers in my left hand. At the same time I take hold of my chair with my right hand and set it back out of my way.

I now quickly place the papers on a table just through a folding door and secretly place the discarded slate in a concealed position. I do this very quickly and return; but meanwhile I am, instructing the sitter how to press his right palm to the table with the fingers spread apart, but with thumb contacting the first finger, etc. I keep my eyes on him except for a moment and take his attention so that there is no danger of his examining the slate the mere instant I am out of view. I return at once to the table, standing, this time, and placing my palms on each side of his. In due time he brings out his slate and finds the message.

Should he examine the table nothing can be found, neither can anything be found on my person. This trick is very effective; and the sitter usually forgets that I placed the slate under the table for him, and states afterwards that the slate never left his hands after he cleaned it.

When I place the slate under the table in the first place, I remark, "May be if the slate is under the table we will get something;" at the same instant placing it under in a natural manner, and requesting him to pass his right hand under the table and grasp it. I make no pause in changing the slates on my lap, and the use of slates with bound edges prevents all noise.

This trick may seem difficult to the reader, but I assure him that it is very simple. It only requires that the details be well fixed in the mind of the operator, and that he have ample courage to try it and direct all operations himself. He must be perfectly at home and not in the least embarrassed, and must act with perfect self-confidence.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 8

Slate Trick Requiring Three Slates and a Flap The Same Used as a Conjuring Trick Preparation of the Slates

I will next describe a slate trick sold by certain dealers. It is a very excellent trick and is used by many of the very best performers of the present day. I know a professional medium who uses it very successfully. I happened to meet him; and in the course of certain discussions over trickery resorted to by certain mediums, I made mention of this trick, and even performed it for him, afterwards explaining it to him. I soon heard of his performing a slate test which answers the description of this one, and with which he was so successful that he received almost a column notice in the *Progressive Thinker* of May 26, 1906.

I may incidentally mention that prior to my discussion of the subject with him, he gave no slate-writing tests. In fact, when I first met him, he made no claims to mediumistic powers, but merely acted as manager for his wife who was a medium. I also happened to explain the billet test to him, wherein the spectators write questions on thin cards addressing them to spirits and then seal them in envelopes. They are taken to the operator, who with them, is placed under a large cloth cover and enveloped in perfect darkness. The operator reads them by holding a small electric flash light behind the envelopes in the darkness. The envelopes are rendered transparent in this manner, and the writing can be easily read.

I soon thereafter heard of his working this trick in a public hall, going into a trance, lying on a table, being covered with a large drape and in absolute darkness. The billets were placed under the cover with him, and he gave the tests, handing out each envelope unopened as he answered the question it contained.

The audience was greatly impressed with this seance. I will now describe the slate trick.

The performer enters with three slates. The subject is seated in a chair but the operator or medium remains standing. The operator now lays the three slates on a table close at hand. He picks up the top slate, which is free of all writing, and washes and dries it on both sides; then holding it to the eyes of the subject, asks him if the slate is perfectly clean, exhibiting both sides to his view. It is a fact so evident that the subject thinks everything honest, and, in fact, does not look for trickery.

The operator now asks the subject to take this slate in his right hand and hold it. This the subject does, and is of course at liberty to thoroughly examine the slate, which for that reason he seldom does. If he should do so there is no harm done, for the slate is without preparation.

The operator then takes the next slate from the table, cleans and exhibits it in the same manner, and finally requests the subject to hold this slate in his left hand. This the subject does. The operator now takes up the remaining slate and thoroughly cleans and exhibits both sides of it to the spectator. Then taking two of the slates, he places two sides of them together right under the eyes of the sitter, calling his attention to the fact that no writing is on either.

The operator now ties the two slates together and gives them to the subject to hold in his lap, and asks the subject to place his handkerchief on them. Next the operator takes a silk foulard or ordinary muffler and asks the subject to wrap the remaining slate in this, to place it on top of the other two slates, and to place his hands on the same. This is done and the operator takes care thereafter in no way to go near or touch the slates. Meanwhile he talks on the proper subject for a time, and then directs the spectator to open and examine the slates. When he does so he finds a long spirit message completely covering one side of one of the slates.

If in any manner it has been possible for the operator to have previously become acquainted with any of the history of the sitter, this message may be from a departed friend or relative, in which case the effect on him is very great.

What was it that happened without the knowledge of the sitter? In what way has the operator accomplished this illusion? First there are certain moves that escape the notice of the subject, and are forgotten simply because they are accomplished in a perfectly natural manner. Also there is a secret about one

of the slates. It is of the style known as a "flap slate." Such a slate is an ordinary one, except that there is a loose piece of slate called a "flap" which fits neatly into the frame of the slate. When the flap is in position the slate appears to the sight as an ordinary slate, and any message written on the surface of the slate proper under this flap, can not be seen. The flap fits loosely enough so that if the slate be turned over it will fall out and expose the concealed message. There are many trick slates, but the "flap slate" is the best and the one most generally used. It can be used in a number of different ways.

This slate, with the message prepared upon it and signed, and the flap in position over it, is situated at the bottom of the three slates. The performer places these three slates on a small table or chair when he enters as stated at first. He cleans and exhibits the first two slates and gives them to the subject to hold as already described. Now he next cleans and exhibits the third slate, using care to grasp it with his fingers so that the flap does not drop out. He turns both sides of it to the subject for inspection, who, after having so thoroughly examined the others, is by this time tired of the repetition of such close examination where nothing can be discovered, and is therefore more ready to look and be satisfied.

The performer now takes from the subject's hand one of the other slates and places it on top of the slate in his own hand. It must be remembered that the slate in the operator's hand is flap side up and in a horizontal position. He places the side edge of the unprepared slate on the side edge of the flap slate, one being at a right angle to the other, and then he calls attention to the fact that there is no writing between the two slates. He next closes the slates.

Now here comes the natural move that escapes the subject and is forgotten afterwards. The operator appears to be examining the edges of the two slates to see if they fit neatly; and in doing so he looks toward the window or other light, and holds the two slates to this light edgewise as if he were peering between them to see if they fit. As he brings up the slates to look through them he merely turns the forward end over towards his eyes and peers through.

This move attracts less attention, if the operator first tilt the right edge of the slates downward, and apparently inspects the left edge of them as if looking to see if they fit neatly. He should then immediately bring them to a horizontal position, tilt up the end furthest from himself, inspect it an instant, and then elevate the lower end towards a window or light and peer through. In this manner the moves seem natural, and if executed rapidly attract no notice.

This turn, of course, brings the flap slate to the top and the flap falls from it quietly into the unprepared slate. As the performer looks through these slates he remarks that they do not seem to fit properly; and suiting his action to the word he lowers his hands with the slates to the table, leaving the lower or unprepared slate, now containing the flap, on the table. Remarking, "Let me try that one," he takes the remaining slate from the subject, quickly placing his slate on top of it. As he does all this he of course does not expose the lower side of the slate in his hands to the view of the subject, because it contains the message. He holds this slate slightly tilted so that the message side is away from the subject.

As he takes this second slate from the subject, he places his slate on top of it and peers through between them quickly, remarking that they fit better; and then taking a long piece of tape he quickly ties and binds these two slates. He now places them on the sitter's lap. Taking a small piece of chalk or slate pencil which he has apparently forgotten, he slips the top slate at one corner slightly to one side, and drops the chalk into the lower slate, slipping the top one back into position. He now asks the subject to place his handkerchief over the slates and his hands on the same. This employs him and keeps his attention from the third slate on the table which now contains the discarded flap. This slate appears to the eyes as merely an ordinary one, although it contains this flap.

The operator now picks up this third slate, and apparently looking for something, asks the subject, "Where did I place the silk muffler?" As there was no silk muffler brought out, this surprises the subject and takes his attention; the operator then remarks, "I guess I forgot it," and steps through the folding doors to get it. He of course carries the third slate with the flap in it, with him. When out of sight he drops the flap into a drawer, and quickly returning with the silk muffler and third slate, starts to wrap up this slate; but changing his mind he requests the subject to wrap it up, place it on top of the others, and then to place his palms on the same. This gives the subject ample opportunity to examine this third slate, and he soon forgets that the operator carried it out of the room for an instant. Of course the message will be found on the top slate of the two that were tied together, and the others never have anything on them.

By this time the subject has forgotten the little move where the operator laid down one slate on the table, and took the other from him, tying them together.

As I perform this trick, I usually perform it for a company as a conjuring trick. I cause a selected word and its definition in a dictionary held by a spectator, to appear on the slate in chalk writing. I force the selection of the word after the slates are tied together, and while they are held by a spectator.

The manner in which I do this is as follows: I first bring from a table in the adjoining parlor a pack of cards which resemble playing cards on their backs, but they have only different printed numbers on the face. I exhibit these and return them to the table.

As I do this I of course exchange them for another pack made up of cards bearing only two numbers; that is, half of the cards bear one number, and half of them another number. Let us suppose these numbers are 38 and 42. I arrange the pack previous to the trick with these two numbers alternately, so that if the pack be cut or separated at any point, the next two cards will be cards bearing the numbers 38 and 42. I leave this pack in view on the table, and the spectators think it the pack they have just examined.

I now return with a velvet bag on the end of a stick or long handle, and ask some one to take from this bag a number of small wooden discs, and to read and call off the numbers printed on each, and then to return them to the bag. This is done, and each is seen to bear a different number. Now reaching this bag to some one else, I request him to draw a single disc from this bag and retain the same, but not to look at it. This is done and he of course draws one with the number on it that I desire, for the reason that the bag on the end of the stick is double, that is, it has a partition in it forming two compartments.

The stick or handle is of tin japanned, and is hollow, containing a piston operated by a spring from a window curtain roller. This piston is a wire, and it extends beyond the handle, through a seam in the top of the cloth partition in the bag; and this part is bent in a half circle, the same as the sides of the upper edge of the bag.

When I bring the bag in, I have the partition to one side, so that the compartment containing the discs made up of different numbers, is open. After a spectator examines a handful of discs and returns them, I release the pressure I am exerting on the rear end of the handle, allowing the piston to revolve; and it thus opens the compartment wherein all the discs are of a single number, and at the same time closes the other compartment. The person drawing the disc can only draw the number desired, as all the discs in this compartment bear the same number.

This number indicates the number of the correct word on the page. I next bring forward the pack of substituted number cards, and asking some spectator to cut them, I next ask him to select the two left on top. I return the others to a drawer, and ask him to add up the two numbers on the selected cards and give the result. This sum indicates which page in the dictionary the third spectator, who holds it, shall select. This the third spectator does, and he then counts to the selected word indicated by the selected disc, and reads it aloud. I move my hand mysteriously over the slates for a moment and appear to listen intently, after which I direct the spectator holding the slates to examine them. The effect is very startling. The paraphernalia for this trick can be obtained from any of the conjuring depots.

I will here describe how to prepare the slates for this experiment. I go to a store with a good supply of slates, take a piece of stiff pasteboard and cut it to fit nicely into the bevel of the frame of some good slate which I wish to use. I then try this pasteboard flap in other slates until I find one in which this flap fits nicely on either side of the slate. I lay this one aside for my purpose and select another, making three that have frames which are uniform in size on both sides, and which are all the same in size, measuring within the bevel of the frames. These frames should also be perfectly square at the corners inside the bevel. As the slates in stock vary in size, this careful selection is necessary. I use slates seven by nine inches inside the bevel for this trick, which is the most suitable size. I also select slates with true or level surfaces.

I next select a slate with a true surface, but as thin as possible. I use the slate in this to make the loose slate flap. I mark the slate portion around next the frame with a knife, then saw away the frame. I next take a saw such as is used in sawing metal, and saw away the edges of the flap at the marks I have made. I now try this flap in one of the slates; and if it be too tight, I remedy by use of a file. I also bevel the edges of this flap for a half inch, so that when it is placed in the frame of one of the slates, the slate will appear nearly natural by showing some of the bevel of the frame on that side.

It is quite necessary to select slates with as deep a bevel to the frames as possible; and if the flap be too thick, it is necessary to grind it thinner with a stone, and then smooth up with a smooth stone or a block and some fine powder.

I prefer padded slates, but select those on which the cloth binding is not too wide; as I desire the slates to rest closely together when I turn them, so that the flap will not have to fall far; and so it will be more certain to fall within the frame of the lower slate.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 9

Slate Trick Requiring a Double-Hinged Slate and a Flap

I will here describe another trick, where only a double or hinged slate is used. I will give the explanation and effect both together. I select for this a double or hinged slate size five by seven, and prepare a flap to fit in one side of one of the slates. It makes no difference whether it fit any of the other sides or not. I bevel this flap on one side only, as but one side of it ever shows. I paste a sheet of newspaper on the side that is not beveled. This must be trimmed off very accurately and well glued to the flap with library paste.

I prepare the message with a soapstone pencil or a piece of chalk, and cover it with this flap. The slate now appears perfectly natural. I seat my subject at a table on which are scattered some newspapers. The table should be large enough for these papers to be in two piles. One of the piles usually has only one paper in it which is opened out on the table. This is farthest from the sitter. The other papers are directly in front of him.

The message is on the outside of one of the slates of the double slate, with the flap over it, so that it appears as an ordinary slate. I grasp this slate in my left hand with my fingers on the flap side, and my thumb on the opposite side. The hinged edge of the slates is the edge that is in my hand. I hold the back of my left hand facing the sitter, who is at my right hand, seated at the table.

I exhibit this flap side of the slate to him, calling his attention to the fact that it is free from writing. I also rub a dry handkerchief over it as if making this fact doubly sure. I instantly turn my hand exhibiting the other side to his view, and likewise calling his attention to the fact of its freedom from writing. I now lay the slate flat on the newspaper under my left hand flap side down, just as I am holding it. As I do this I slightly pull up my sleeves as if they annoy me, and as if this were why I have just laid the slate down. Of course, when the slate is laid down in this position, the flap drops instantly on the newspaper; and afterwards, when the slate is lifted up, it remains on the paper. It will not be noticed at all, having the sheet of newspaper pasted to its upper surface, if the attention of the subject is not directed to this paper, but is kept instead on the slate as it is being handled.

I instantly remark, "Of course, you desire to see the inside of these slates also"; and suiting the action to the word, I carelessly lift the upper slate with

my left hand, grasping it by the edge nearest the spectator. This is the edge opposite the cloth hinge; so as I lift this edge up, the slates assume a vertical position, opening out and hanging suspended below my hand. The insides of the two slates are thus exposed to the view of the subject, and are seen to be free from writing. I take my right hand and quickly grasp the lower slate, closing it up under the upper one, which at the same time I lower to a horizontal position.

This folds the two slates together or closes them, by folding in the direction away from the sitter; so that what were before the inside surfaces of the slates are now the outside, and the hinged edge now faces the subject. The message is now inside the slates on the upper surface of the lower one.

I now grasp both slates with my left hand, and I take a rubber band from my pocket with my right hand and quickly snap it around them. I give the slates to the spectator and say, "Place them on the table with your palms on them. I will remove these papers which are in the way." As I say this I lift the pile of papers from in front of him; and as he places the slate on the table, I place these papers on top of the other paper on which rests the invisible flap. I lift this paper up now with the others, and take them all including the discarded flap, and quickly remove them from view.

Meanwhile I instruct the sitter how to hold his palms, and I instantly return and direct the seance.

In due time he finds the message. This trick is excellent if worked carefully and not too slowly. If used in the daylight, too strong a light should be avoided; although I have no trouble anywhere, because I always keep absolute control of the subject's attention, which is the most vital part of any trick.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 10

Independent Paper Writing Two Slates and a Silicate Flap Used

I will next describe a trick known to the "profession" as "Independent Paper Writing." A number of small tablets of scratch paper are brought out. The size that I generally use is about four by five inches. The subject is requested to select a sheet of paper from any of the tablets, which he does. Meanwhile the operator brings to the table two slates about the size of seven by nine inches inside measure.

The operator requests the subject to place his sheet of paper on one of the slates, which he does. There is no writing on the slates, which fact the subject can see. The other slate is now placed on top of the one with the sheet of blank paper. The edges of the slates are made even, and the slates held for a time on the head of the medium in view of the sitter. In due time the slates are separated and the paper is found to be covered with a message on both sides. The writing is in pencil or ink according to the pleasure of the operator.

If the subject has previously been induced to write his questions and retain the same, this message answers them in detail and is signed by the name of the spirit to whom they were addressed.

There are many means of securing knowledge of questions written secretly. Some of the best I am unable to give in this work, as I am under a contract with the dealer from whom I purchased the same to maintain secrecy in regard to the method. Any of the means previously given may be used if the performer desire. Farther on, however, I will give some additional information on the subject.

I will now explain the slate part of the "Independent Paper Writing." The slates are selected from bound slates, just as the three slates were selected for the first "flap slate" trick. One of these contains a flap, but it is not a slate flap. It is what is known as a "silicate slate flap." These are very light and about as thick as pasteboard. Procured from some dealers they are a little too dark to exactly match the slate in color, but I have generally been able to procure exactly the proper shade from George L. Williams & Co., 7145 Champlain Ave., Chicago, Ill.

In the prepared slate which I lay upon the table, and upon which the subject is to place the blank sheet of paper, is a similar sheet of paper under the flap. The message is, of course, written on this paper in advance. As the flap is over it, nothing can be seen and the slate appears merely as an ordinary one. Most generally I take the sheet of paper from my subject with the tips of my fingers and place it on this slate. I then lay the other slate, which I exhibit to the spectator, on top of this one. I even up the edges, and then grasp the two slates by their edges tightly and bring them on top of my head for a time. This move naturally turns the slates over, and of course the flap drops quietly into the lower slate. Meanwhile I address the subject in the proper manner; and when I take the slates down, lowering them to the table, I leave the slate that is next my head underneath the other one. I lift off the top slate and hand the subject the slip of paper, which he sees at the first glance is covered with writing. The effect is very great.

The subject immediately begins to read the message with such interest, that I have ample opportunity to take the slate containing the flap in my left hand, and while the subject reads the message aloud (which I direct him to do), I step through a door to a drawer to get some article; and, of course, I drop the flap and concealed slip of blank paper into the drawer, but keep the slate still in my hand as I return to the subject. I then lay this slate on the table while I inspect the message.

This is really one of the most effective tricks and is very easy to perform. The operator should select slates that are well matched and should procure a flap of the desired color. The flaps are very cheap.

Sometimes I tear a corner from the slip of paper containing the message. When I do this I conceal it between the ends of my fingers; and when the subject gives me his selected sheet of paper, I tear a similar corner from it. I apparently hand this last corner to the subject with the request that he retain it. Of course, I give him the corner which was torn from the message slip instead and conceal the last corner torn off in its place.

After the message is produced and read, I remind the subject to see if this corner fits his slip of paper. Worked as a conjuring trick, this last effect adds some improvement to the trick; but I am not sure that it adds to the effect if given as a genuine phenomenon; for tearing off the corner reminds one of conjuring tricks, and thus suggests the idea of trickery.

However, I generally tear off this small corner so that on one side of it, there is a portion of one of the words of the message. In this case, instead of giving this corner to the subject to hold, I lay it on the table, writing side down, and request him to place his finger on it. Finding a part of one of the words on this corner gives the idea that this writing was done while he held it. This adds more mystery to the effect.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 11

Slate Trick with a Single Slate and a Flap, which is Suitable for Platform Production

Methods of Forcing the Selection of a Certain Word

Methods of Forcing the Selection of a Sum of Figures

The Same Trick where Two Slates are Used

The Same when Three Slates are Used and a Spoken Question

Answered with Words in Colored Writing

The trick described here is most suitable for platform production. The performer takes a single slate in his hand and a piece of chalk in the other hand. He exhibits one side of the slate to the audience, saying, "Side one." As he does this he makes a large figure "one" on that side of the slate. He then turns the slate, and saying, "Side two," makes a large figure "two" on that side of the slate. He next steps to a chair or table, and taking a damp cloth, washes off first one side and then the other. He immediately sets the slate in full view of the spectators in a vertical position, so that one side faces the spectators and the other side is of course hidden from view. He leans it against any object that may be convenient, usually against a chair or table leg with one edge resting on the floor. In a short time he lifts the slate, exhibiting the rear surface on which is written a message in chalk writing.

The secret of this trick is again a slate flap. The message is prepared and the flap in place. The performer grasps the slate so as to hold the flap in position, and exhibits and marks the two sides of the slate. He now steps to a table or chair to get a piece of damp cloth; and as he washes "side one" of the slate, he rests the lower edge of the slate on the table or chair. As he does this he tilts the slate backwards slightly. He next turns the slate so that "side two" faces the audience; and as he washes this side, he releases his hold on the flap on the rear of the slate, and allows it to drop on the table or chair.

If a chair be used, a newspaper is in place spread out on its seat; and a piece of newspaper is also pasted on what will be the upper side of the flap after it be dropped on the newspaper. If instead of a chair a table be used, and if it have a dark or slate colored cover, no newspaper need be used on either the table or flap. However, the newspaper can be used when using a table if the performer so desire, or the slate can first be cleaned and then taken to the paper to be wrapped up. In this case, the performer merely places the slate on the newspaper, flap side down, remarking that he will wrap it up; then as if suddenly changing his mind, he remarks, "No, I will stand it here where you

can all watch it, instead." He then places the slate in the vertical position before described; but of course uses care not to expose the rear side of the slate containing the message.

Some performers prefer to have the table top covered with velvet or felt, and a piece of the same material glued on what will be the upper surface of the flap after it is dropped on the table.

This trick makes an excellent conjuring trick, if a single word in a book be chosen and then made to appear on the slate in chalk writing. In this case I first prepare the slate, and after thoroughly washing both sides, place it on the platform as I have described.

I now take two books not alike, and descend to the audience, giving one of them to some spectator to hold. Next I give a card to a second spectator and ask him to insert it in the end of the remaining book which I still hold. I ask him to let it protrude from between the leaves about a half inch. I tell him to place it between any of the leaves he may desire. When he has done so I step to another spectator and request him to open the book at the position occupied by the card, and to call aloud the page that it marks.

I step to this third spectator, a slight distance away, and before I reach him I ask him if he will assist me. As I ask this I start towards him. All eyes are turned towards him as I direct my attention to him, and of course at this instant I turn the book in my hands end for end. In the other end of the book a duplicate card has previously been placed at the page I desire; and as I approach him, my fingers secretly press the second spectator's card entirely into the book. The third spectator, of course, opens the book at the position marked by the duplicate card.

As soon as he reads aloud the number of the selected page on his right (which I request him to do) I ask the spectator holding the other book to open it at the page chosen, and to read aloud the bottom word, which is of course the word prepared on the rear of the slate. If the performer can procure a book which somewhere within it has two consecutive pages on which the bottom words are the same, he can have some spectator choose whether the page selected shall be the right one or the left one. This choice should be made before the book containing the cards is opened.

If such a book can not be procured, then the operator can simply ask the spectator opening the first book to read aloud the page number on his right. He should then turn to the person holding the second book and request him

to turn to that page and read aloud the bottom word. As soon as the word is read aloud, the performer takes both books, runs to the stage, and turning over the slate exhibits the word. The slate is passed down for inspection.

Another method can be used for forcing the choice of, say, the right page, of the two pages where the duplicate card is located. When the third spectator opens the book at the card, the performer turns to another spectator and asks, "Which page will you take, the right or left?" If the spectator choose the right page, the performer directs the person holding the book to read aloud this page number. If, however, the person should take the left page, the performer then remarks in a natural manner to the person holding the book, "He chooses the left, so you will have to choose the right." This seems perfectly natural to the audience, and the person holding the book is then directed to read aloud the number of "his page."

If the operator prefer, he can, when the spectator first opens the book, stand directly in front of him and grasp the two sides of the book with his two hands. He can then ask, "Which shall I take, the right or left page?" If some one replies, "The right," the operator asks the person holding the book to read aloud the number of the page on his right; but if the left be chosen, the operator says, "Read aloud the page number on my left." In either case the page is the same. If when asking the question, "Which shall I take, the right or left page?" the operator emphasize the word "right" slightly, and then pause a mere instant before rapidly continuing the question, the "right" will almost invariably be chosen.

I consider this slate trick as the best one for stage work that I have seen. It is very simple, and the simplest tricks are always the best and most difficult of detection. After the message is produced and the slate sent out for inspection, the operator piles some unused articles on the discarded flap and removes all together.

One operator, when performing this trick in a parlor, previously takes from the shelves of the library some new book that has never been opened, and of the style that opens rather stiffly. He selects the page he desires, and proceeds to open the book up widely at this page. After this, the book will naturally open at this place. He is careful not to open it widely elsewhere.

He now selects two playing cards from duplicate packs, the cards being duplicates of each other, and places one secretly in this book where it has

been opened. When ready to perform, he takes one of the packs of cards, and takes a card from it apparently at random. This card is really the duplicate of the one in the book. The performer gives this card to a spectator, and asks him to push it into the book between the leaves at any position he may select, pushing it entirely out of sight. This is done. Now without any change whatever the performer presents this book to a second spectator to open at the card and call out the page. As he does this the book naturally falls open at the place where the first card was concealed, and where the glue used in binding the book has been broken. The card being there, and being apparently a mere playing card selected at random from a pack, lends a color of genuineness to the performance.

Another operator, when performing this slate trick, causes the sum of a number of figures to appear on the slate instead of a word or message. He accomplishes this as follows: He writes a horizontal row of three figures on the front fly leaf of some book. Under this row of three figures he writes in different hands, two or three other rows and draws a line below them as if ready to add them up.

When performing, he takes this book; and opening it at the back fly leaf, he requests a spectator to write a horizontal row of three figures, each figure to be his own choice. When this is done he takes the book, and in the same manner has another spectator write three figures under these. He continues this until there are as many horizontal rows of figures as he has prepared on the front fly leaf.

He now requests the last writer to draw a line under all of the figures; and then, taking the book, he passes it to still another spectator, with a request that he add the figures carefully and announce their sum verbally. Of course, when he gives this book to the last spectator he opens it at the front fly leaf, (having previously allowed the book to close), and the last spectator adds up the figures written by the operator and whose sum is on the prepared slate.

Some performers produce this same result by having the spectators write on a card, and then exchanging the card; but the method with the book is the better, as it is perfectly evident that the book is not exchanged. This adds to the after effect of the trick.

I am acquainted with a performer who uses two slates instead of one when performing this trick. He first cleans the unprepared slate on both sides, showing the spectators that both sides are clean. He then gives this slate to a spectator to hold. He next cleans the slate containing the flap, resting one edge on a newspaper spread on a table while he washes each side. Of course, he allows the flap to drop onto the paper from behind the slate while cleaning the second side of the slate. Having newspaper pasted on one side of the flap as before stated, it can not be seen when on the paper.

He immediately advances to the spectator who holds the first slate, and says, "I will tie them together." As he does this he carries the slate with the message writing side down, so that no one can see it; and quickly placing this slate on top of the other one, he ties the two together and leaves them in the possession of the spectator to be held.

I know of another performer who uses three slates in this trick and gets an answer to a question which some one asks aloud. Certain words in the answer are written in colors such as the spectator may choose. His assistant behind the scenes has the third slate with the flap; and when the operator gets some spectator to ask the question, the assistant immediately writes the answer and lays the flap over it. The operator at the time asks some spectator to designate which words in the answer shall be in certain colors, and if the fifth, seventh, etc., be chosen, the assistant writes these words with colored crayons.

The assistant now, after laying the flap over the message, places the slate between the leaves of a newspaper, flap side up. This paper he quietly lays upon a table on the stage unobserved. While this is being done, the performer has taken the two unprepared slates down to the spectators and had them thoroughly examined. This has taken the attention of the spectators so that no one has observed the assistant enter and leave the stage.

The operator now returns to the stage; and stepping to this table, he lays one slate on the table behind the paper and starts to place the edge of his other slate on the front part of the table while he numbers and cleans the sides. The newspaper appears to be in his way; so with his left hand he draws it backwards on the table over the first slate laid down; and then, resting the other slate on the table, numbers its two sides with a piece of chalk. He now cleans both sides thoroughly and stands this slate edgewise on the floor against a chair. He next apparently draws from under the newspaper on the table the other slate. In reality, he draws out the prepared slate with the flap in position from between the leaves of the newspaper.

He now numbers both sides of this slate, standing it edgewise on the newspaper and showing each side as he does so. He next cleans the flap side thoroughly, and then turns the slate to clean the other side, and while so doing allows the flap to fall from behind the slate upon the newspaper.

As soon as the second or unprepared side is clean, the operator places this slate in front of the one on the floor and lifts both together, ties them securely, and passes them to the audience to be held for a time. In due time the spectators untie them, finding the message answering the spoken question. The designated words are in the chosen colors which makes the effect very great.

The credit for the invention of this last method belongs to a magician, Mr. Edward Benedict of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 12

Methods of Obtaining a Secret Impression of the Writing of a Sitter A Store-Room Reading where this is Used A Test Using a Prepared Book How to "Switch" a Question Tricks Depending on this Principle Tests Given by Various Chicago Mediums Reading a Message by Pressing it on a Skull Cap Worn by Medium

I will here describe a few methods of obtaining a name or a question which is written by a sitter, and where the sitter usually retains the writing in his own possession. The first that I will describe is the most improved method known at present, and is almost universally used by the professional mediums traveling over the country.

The idea is to get an impression of the writing that is not a carbon impression. The impression is, in fact, invisible until after it is "developed." The paper used is a thin, highly glazed paper. A tablet of this paper is provided for the subject to write upon. He can make an inspection of the tablet if he so desire, and he will find nothing. The operator first prepares a few sheets of the paper by rubbing over one side of them with wax. Some mediums use paraffin wax, which has been melted and mixed with a small amount of vaseline. If this wax be used, it must be kneaded with the hands while cooling and afterwards

pressed into cakes. I prefer to use "spermaceti" wax. The wax being white, can not be seen on the paper after the same has been coated with it.

The sheet must be laid on a flat, smooth surface and thoroughly rubbed over with the wax. This prepared sheet is generally placed in the tablet two or three sheets below the top, coated side down. It should be held in place with library paste; and another prepared sheet should be similarly placed a little further down, to be used in case emergency demands it.

When the writing is done, an invisible impression of it is transferred from the waxed surface of the prepared sheet, to the sheet next under it. Of course this can not be seen until developed, as the wax is very thin and is the color of the paper. After the subject writes his questions, and removes the sheet bearing them, the operator secures this tablet by almost any secret means: and then he secretly removes the sheet bearing the impression and develops it. This is most generally done by throwing on the sheet some powdered charcoal, and shaking the sheet around until the powder adheres to the wax, after which the surplus powder is dusted off. The writing appears plainly and may be easily read. Some performers use plumbago, lampblack, or coal dust instead of charcoal. Many different powders may be used. The magician Mr. Edward Benedict merely holds the wax impression over a lighted gas jet moving it about. The flame blackens the wax portion which melts and dampens the paper where it adheres. If a little camphor be held in the flame it will blacken the impression more completely.

When this trick is used at private readings in apartments, the operator after the writing usually leads the sitter into the next room for a reading. Meanwhile an assistant secretly secures the tablet and leaves another in its place that is unprepared. Generally the door between the two rooms is left open; and it is only necessary for the operator to engage the sitter for a moment, to give opportunity to the assistant to make the exchange, which can be made in many different ways. After the assistant has time to develop the writing, the operator leaves the room for a moment on some trifling errand and of course secures the information while out of the room.

Sometimes the operator produces a slate message for the subject; and then while the subject is inspecting it secretly exchanges tablets from a large pocket in his coat. When this method is used, the operator generally pretends to hear some one at his outside door; and as his servant fails to respond, he excuses himself for a moment, and taking advantage of his absence, develops and reads the writing.

I am indebted to an accomplished magician, Mr. Gabriel Rasgorshek, for the secret of an excellent means of working this trick. It is being successfully worked by an expert medium at the present time, and Mr. Rasgorshek is thoroughly informed as to the means employed.

The medium gives his readings in a large store room. He curtains off the room into three apartments, making a large reception room in front, a middle or waiting room, and a third room in the rear where is concealed an assistant unknown to all callers. He uses a twelve-foot cabinet in the center of the rear of the middle room, directly against the rear cross curtain. The cabinet is merely formed of curtains, and is divided into two compartments by a curtain partition.

In one of the compartments of the cabinet is a table, a prepared tablet and pencils. This is the room into which each sitter is invited by an attendant, to write out and prepare his questions, signing his name to them. In the large middle or waiting room near the walls are seats for callers, and one caller at a time is invited to enter the solitary room in the cabinet and prepare his questions. The other room in the cabinet has a table near the back curtain, with a chair on each side of it. In this latter room, on one side of the table the medium is seated, giving the readings, slate writings, etc.

The concealed assistant in the rear of the apartments secretly reaches through the cabinet curtain into the room where the tablet has just been used, and removes it, leaving another prepared tablet in its place for the next subject. He now develops and reads the questions, names, etc.; copies them neatly on a small card and also adds to them information secured from the city directory; then placing the card containing the copy in a cleft in the end of a stick, pushes it through a small slit in the back curtain of the other room in the cabinet. This slit is located so that the stick enters the cabinet just by the medium's hand behind the table. The subject is by this time on the opposite side of the table receiving his reading, and- the medium secretly reads the information. The medium has a strong electric light back of him which makes this quite easy. The man in the rear apartment must be as expert as the medium, and he can by a careful search of the directory, and by a reference to notes of other readings given to other callers, frequently push much information into the view of the medium. Meanwhile another subject has been invited into the other room in the cabinet to prepare his questions.

There is also a small cloth tube on the side of the table next the medium's hand. This tube runs through the rear curtain. In case some one has become unduly excited over a reading, and has prepared questions at home and returned for a second reading, the medium takes them in his hand for a moment, fingering them. He keeps on hand a number of folded billets of different styles; so that when he sees the ones the subject has, he can secretly secure duplicates in his palm. When he fingers the subject's billets, he adroitly exchanges them for his own, and apparently places the subject's billets in a book on the table. In reality he places the substitutes in the book, "palming" the originals, which he sends through the cloth tube to the assistant. Very soon they are returned to the hand of the medium under the table. He now takes the billets from the book, apparently returning them to the sitter, but really again substituting, so that the originals are returned to the sitter. He conceals the duplicates; and by this time the information begins to come into his view beneath the table, and the reading becomes very effective.

There is a means of developing the wax impression that I consider superior to the methods given above; but I am restrained from making it public by a promise of secrecy to the dealer from whom I purchased the secret. It can be obtained of George L. Williams & Co., 7145 Champlain Avenue, Chicago, Ill. The method given here, however, works very well, and is the one generally used by most mediums; this secret has become common property among mediums and has even been published before. In the chapter entitled, "Performances of the Annie Eva Fay Type," I will give some further information in regard to developing these impressions and the methods of using the same. This will be of considerable value to the performer.

A magician, Mr. C. S. Weller of Mitchell, South Dakota, has experimented considerably with different methods of preparing impression paper and developing the impressions. He sometimes prepares the sheets with common cocoa butter, and sometimes he saturates the paper with a forty per cent. solution of cream and water, afterwards stretching the sheets in frames until dry. These can be used on a marble-top table, the bottom of a porcelain dish, or a marble slab. In this case he dusts ultramarine blue on the object bearing the impression and then blows it lightly, so that all of the powder is blown off except that which adheres to the impression. Any of the colored powders may be used. Some performers place a prepared sheet on a glass plate and another sheet over this for the subject to write on. In this case the impression is transferred to the glass plate.

I am acquainted with a lady medium, who, when she gives private readings, answers some questions for each of the sitters, which they have written and retained, giving them their correct names, etc. The method she uses is very simple, yet she assures me that it works most successfully.

This medium is working in connection with a lady "Palmist" who always receives the visitors in the waiting room. When the visitor arrives, this lady has a book in her hands, which she has apparently just been reading. There is no furniture in the room except some chairs. The lady seats the visitor; and in case this person does not desire a "Palm Reading," she says, "Madam B-is not quite ready to receive visitors just now; you will have to wait a few minutes." She then continues, "While you are waiting, just write down the questions you wish to ask," and she gives the visitor a sheet of paper and a pencil; and as there is no table upon which to write, she also gives this person the book which is still in her hand.

She places the sheet of paper on the back of the book and says, "Write the questions you desire answered on that sheet of paper and keep it. Madam B-- prefers to have you write them down so you will not forget them. Sign your name to them and address them to some spirit near to you."

The subject does as requested, and the lady again tells her to "just keep her questions." She now relieves the visitor of the book. She waits and converses for a while, and then says, "I do not see why Madam B-- does not come. I will go and see if she is ready." She retires to the other rooms, and incidentally takes her book with her. She quickly returns with a duplicate book in her hands which the visitor thinks is the original, and says, "Madam B-- is nearly ready, and she will be out in a few moments." She converses with the visitor until the medium comes in and proceeds to give the reading, which fully answers the questions.

The first book was a new one and had a paper cover on the backs. Under this cover, on each back, was a carbon sheet, with a sheet of white paper under it. When the lady went to see if the medium were ready, she left this book with the medium, returning quickly with the duplicate. The medium read the impression and committed all to memory before entering.

There are many methods of secretly securing an impression of the writing of a sitter. Sometimes, where no table is handy, the subject is given an ordinary "clip board," such as stationers furnish for clamping bill-heads and blank papers. This consists of stiff pasteboard and a spring clip or clamp.

A sheet of blank paper is in position held by the clip; and the writing is transferred from a sheet of copying carbon concealed under the mottled paper covering the inside of the "clip board," to a sheet of white paper between it and the board. The "clip board" is then taken secretly by an assistant, or sometimes by the medium who excuses himself for a moment on some pretense, after adroitly exchanging a concealed "clip board" for the prepared one which he also conceals. A sharp knife is then run under the edge of the mottled paper of the board separating it therefrom. The carbon is removed and the impression read. After this a new blank sheet is put on the board, the carbon replaced, all is neatly covered by mottled paper which is pasted in position and the "clip board" is again ready for a sitter.

The most common method and the one most generally used is a bold "switch" of the paper before the eyes of the sitter, when the operator takes it to press it against his forehead. When this method is used, the medium and subject sit at opposite sides of a table. The writing is done on a small card, which is then folded two times by the subject. The medium reaches and takes it in this condition, and presses it against his forehead; then returns it to the subject to press against his own forehead for a time. The operator again takes it, and pressing it to his own forehead, gives the reading.

In this method the operator has concealed in his left palm a duplicate card folded similarly; and when he takes the card from the subject with his right hand, first places it in his left hand directly over the duplicate. The back of the operator's hand is toward the subject so that the cards are concealed from his view. Now with a deft move of the fingers, he pushes forward the duplicate into view, withdrawing the original, then fingering it with his right hand he takes the duplicate and presses it to his own forehead. He next hands this duplicate to the subject to press to his head; and meanwhile with his left hand below the table, he secretly opens and reads the question. The card can be opened and folded silently, which is the reason cards are used instead of paper. The original is now palmed in the left hand, and the former maneuvers are gone through with again; this time handing back to the subject his own card. After this the reading is given.

There is another method of making the "switch," which is in very general use. In this case it is made with one hand alone. Soft paper is used instead of cards so that it will fold into a smaller space. Proper paper can be opened and re-folded silently if care be used. The slips are of a uniform size, so that when

folded they will always be of the same size. The subject is instructed how to fold them after he shall finish his writing.

When the operator makes this "switch," he has a duplicate piece of paper inside his right fingers, held between the middle and first finger near the end. He keeps the back of this hand towards the subject so that the duplicate can not be seen; and when he picks up from the table the paper that the subject has written upon, he deftly draws it from the ends of his fingers with his thumb, up into his palm beyond the duplicate, and then with his thumb pushes the duplicate into view.

With a little practice this "switch" can be made in an instant, and the move will escape the subject entirely. If, at the moment the operator picks up the paper, he addresses the subject, the latter will invariably glance into his face for an instant; just at this moment the right hand deftly makes the "shift" and instantly brings the duplicate into the view of the subject in a perfectly natural manner, which seems entirely honest in appearance. He then proceeds with whatever method he may prefer in finishing the trick.

I will next describe two tricks depending entirely on this "switch." They are used very extensively by the professional mediums of this day in the larger cities. The second one I will describe is used by a number of the most celebrated mediums of Chicago, such as advertise with flaming head-lines in the daily papers.

In the simplest form the operator seats the subject at a large table, facing it, and near the right corner of one of its sides. There is nothing on the table but a few slips of paper, a Bible, and a bell. The subject is instructed to write his questions, fold his paper and lay the same on the table, and then to tap the bell when ready.

On hearing the bell the medium enters, steps to the table and picks up the billet, at the same instant asking the subject if this paper contains his questions, name, etc. At this instant, while the subject glances at the medium's eyes, the "shift" is made; and the operator, instantly, opens the Bible with his left hand, and with his right apparently inserts the billet between the leaves, closing the book. He, of course, inserts the duplicate billet, retaining the original in his right palm. He now steps to the left side of the subject, who remains seated at the table. He faces from the table so that his left side is next to the left side of the subject, and he instructs the latter to

place his hands on the Bible. Then the medium places his left palm on the subject's head to "establish conditions", and as he does so he places it rather on the side of the head nearest himself, and so that his palm and wrist are opposite the left eye of the subject. This prevents the subject from turning his face towards the medium, or seeing what he is secretly doing.

The reader must form a good mental picture of their positions if he desire to realize the possibilities of this trick. The medium has his back to the table and his left side to the left of the subject, who faces the table. They are thus facing in opposite directions; and while the medium now describes his impressions to the subject he secretly opens the billet with his right hand and reads it. His right hand is behind the range of vision of the subject, and is also concealed from the view of the latter by the medium's person and left hand, which latter is pressed against the upper left side of the subject's head.

He now folds it again, placing it in position between the ends of the first and second fingers; and turning he opens the Bible, taking out the billet and apparently presenting it to the subject. He asks the subject to hold it to his own head; and of course he gives the subject the original billet, secretly "palming" the substitute at the same time.

Next he places his hand on the subject's head, and gives the reading, answering the subject's questions, giving his name, etc.

In the next trick, which is slightly more complicated, five slips of paper are used. The medium addresses the subject somewhat as follows: "You came here for me to help you. You are in trouble, or worried about something, else you would not be here. Now I desire to help you if I can. I charge one dollar, and I answer four questions. It is necessary for you to ask these questions if you want me to be certain to answer them. If I were to proceed of my own accord, I might give you something which you would not care for, therefore I will ask you to write your questions on these four slips of paper, writing only on one side of the paper, and folding them twice with the writing inside. On the fifth slip write your name, occupation, and address. Now write questions which, if answered will be a benefit to you, something that will do you some good. Let one be about business matters, another about love or family matters, etc. If your desire results that will benefit you, write your questions openly, giving the names of all persons concerned, in a straightforward and honest manner. When they are written, folded, and all is ready, tap the bell." The medium now retires until he hears the bell.

The subject invariably complies with all conditions. When the operator enters, he immediately takes the billets one at a time, as they lie on the table, and crimps or folds them an additional time. He does this hurriedly, as if he desires them to be very securely folded. Of course he "switches" the last one, leaving a "dummy" in its place, and secretly retaining the original in his right palm.

He now takes the same position as in the previous trick, with his back to the table, left side to the left side of the sitter, hand on the sitter's head, etc. He then asks the subject to "make a wish" while he is "establishing conditions." While the subject is thinking of a wish, the medium secretly opens the billet with his right hand, reading and re-folding it as in the other trick. He now remarks, "Have you made a wish?" On being answered in the affirmative, he replies, "That wish will not be entirely fulfilled." He now turns, and picking up one of the billets, apparently hands it to the subject, requesting him to hold it to his own head. Of course he changes the billets again, handing the subject the one he has just secretly read, and retaining in his palm the new one. He requests the subject to hold it to his own head with one hand, and to lay his other hand on the Bible.

The medium now places his palm on the side of the subject's head as in the preceding trick, and with his right hand secretly opens and reads the second billet, memorizing it. As he does this he is verbally answering the question on the first billet, which the subject is now holding to his head. If the first question was, "Shall I make a certain investment in mining stocks, etc.," the medium says, "I see you contemplate investing in mines, etc., etc. This will not prove a profitable investment; you should by no means do this. I see there is another opportunity coming to you for an investment, that will be much safer, etc., etc. Now, sir, open the question you are holding to your forehead, and see if I have answered it correctly."

Meanwhile the medium has secretly read the second question, and the billet bearing it is in position between his fingers. He now picks up another billet apparently giving it to the subject to hold as in the first case. Of course he gives the subject the second one which he has just secretly read, and retains in his palm the new one. While he answers the second question, which may pertain to love or family affairs, he again secretly reads the question in his right palm.

After answering the question, the subject is directed to open his billet and see if it be correctly answered; and the medium turns and picks up another one,

apparently presenting it to him. This is continued until all of the questions are answered, and the subject's name, occupation, etc., given.

At the last billet, which is the "dummy," the medium again makes the "shift," retaining the dummy and giving the subject the last genuine billet. This time he leaves the side of the subject, and answers the question correctly without contact with him. This trick is very effective and gives the greatest satisfaction to the medium's patrons.

There are so many methods of gaining knowledge of what a sitter secretly writes that it is impossible to give them all here. It is safe to say that in any case where the subject is required to write anything, that there is always a secret means of gaining knowledge of the writing. In such cases no information is ever given except such as could be inferred from the writing, or such as can be given by shrewd guesswork.

I know one medium who wears a skull cap when giving a reading. It is made of black silk and in the top of it, held in place by a lining of oil cloth, is a sponge saturated with odorless alcohol. The subject writes his questions on a card and seals it in an envelope. The medium and spectator sit at opposite sides of a table, and the operator now takes the envelope and presses it on top of his head directly over the hidden sponge. The alcohol renders the envelope transparent; and after a moment the medium brings the envelope in front of his eyes, with its upper edge resting against his forehead, and there reads the question. He is near-sighted and this is quite easy for him.

He holds it in this position while he talks to the subject, until the alcohol evaporates and the envelope assumes its natural appearance. He then gives the reading and returns the envelope unopened. This is a very impressive trick. The use of odorless alcohol for such purpose is well known in some quarters, but I think this method of using it is not generally known at present. The envelope never leaves the sitter's sight and the experiment appears very marvelous.

Other means of securing information from writing are sometimes adopted, but they are complicated and in some cases require a very expert operator. Dr. Schlessinger referred to elsewhere in this volume seemed to be able to so manipulate his subjects as to secure much information from the writing in the most concealed manner ever known. I merely mention this that the reader may be on his guard in any case where the subject writes anything whatever,

and where the operator claims to secure knowledge of such writing through the assistance of spirits of the dead.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 13

Tricks where the Sitter Brings his Own Slates

Various Traps

Psychometric Tests

Message on Slates Wrapped in the Original Paper in which they were Purchased

Other Messages

I will here describe a few slate tricks wherein the subject takes his own slates (usually marked) with him. In the first case I am about to describe, the medium is supposed to be in his own home where things can be arranged for the business. The subject comes with two slates either tied, screwed together, or with merely a single slate.

In this instance the medium does not even look at the slates which the sitter brings. He merely directs the subject to lay the slates well under a rather large and heavy library or center table. This table has a large heavy cover or drape. When the subject does this he is directed to take a seat at this table and place his palms thereon.

The medium usually stands and places his palms on the opposite side of the table, and for a time interests the subject in conversation. During this time an assistant in a low room under the floor silently pushes up a small and well-concealed trap in the floor and carpet. This trap is directly under the table, the carpet is cut very neatly over the cuts in the floor, and is left tacked in position. He takes the slates inside with him leaving others of the same appearance in their place. As soon as the message is ready he again changes the slates and hooks the trap shut from underneath so it will be solid. As the carpet is tacked along the cut, there is no danger of the sitter discovering anything of the kind, should such an idea enter his head.

There is a variation of this trick that is far superior to it. In this case the medium takes the subject into a very light room, bare of blinds, carpet, and furniture, except a curtain cabinet across a corner; a small simple table is in the cabinet, and two chairs are in the room near the only door.

The walls and ceiling are papered, and the floor can be seen so easily, that any one thinking of such an idea could plainly see that there are no traps in it. It can also be seen that there are none in walls or baseboard, which in this room is too narrow to admit a person through any trap which might be concealed in it.

The table and cabinet are thoroughly inspected, and then the subject lays his own slates on the table in the cabinet and draws the curtains. He takes a seat with the medium near the door, and after a time goes into the cabinet and examines his marked slates. They are covered with messages both inside and outside.

The effect of this is simply beyond description. It is accomplished in a very simple manner. The secret is a trap in the ceiling which is masked by a heavy dark border of the ceiling paper. It is hooked up solidly by a strong hook opposite its hinges, and the curtains of the cabinet extend too high for its operation to be seen from outside the cabinet. The ceiling is too high to be inspected by the subject, and in fact he never thinks of it. An assistant from the room above opens the trap, which is padded, and reaching down a long rod with a grip on the end of it, draws up the slates and prepares them.

It adds to the effect if the medium have a music box in the room, which plays during the wait. This also hides any noises. This is the same trap that a noted medium of San Francisco has used for materializing. He has many assistants and much paraphernalia. The "spirits" descend and ascend on a padded ladder which is slipped down from above. The medium to whom I refer is probably the greatest in the world at materializing; and his assistants are so good at "making up," that any noted character can be "materialized" in a few moments.

When this trap is used for slate writing, and if the subject comes with a single slate, it is sometimes placed in a shallow box and the box locked and sealed. The box is of wood, is about an inch thick and just large enough to take in a slate. There is a secret sliding panel in the box which can be slipped out by the assistant to permit the writing. If no panel is used then a slate pencil is inserted within the box on the slate before locking. The pencil is made as follows: A round piece of soft iron is coated with powdered chalk or pulverized slate pencil mixed in a little glue. In this case the writing is done by manipulating a powerful magnet on the outside of the box. The soft iron core of the pencil is drawn by the magnet, making the marks with its outside coating.

At one time a marvelous medium appeared in a neighboring city, giving slate writings in so mysterious a manner that it caused considerable talk and discussion among the thinking men of that community. A certain reporter called for a slate writing and was greatly mystified.

This reporter took his own slate with him, which he marked. The medium merely placed it on the floor in the room where they sat, and it never left the sight of the reporter; yet after a time it was examined and a message found thereon.

The medium then stated to this reporter that he would forfeit twenty-five dollars if he could not produce a message for any individual whatever without the slate (which said person could bring with him) leaving that individual's sight.

This was a pretty bold challenge; so the reporter decided to take a certain gentleman who was a friend of his, and by-the-way an expert magician, to this medium for a slate writing. The gentleman selected was Dr. A. M. Wilson of Kansas City, Mo., editor of the magician's journal, *The Sphinx*, and to whom I am indebted for the secret of this impressive trick.

Dr. Wilson purchased and took a slate with him, which he marked. On his arrival the medium insisted on taking the slate and laying it on the floor. The Doctor did not object to this, as he felt sure that the medium would be unable to divert his attention from the slate for a single instant. I will mention that a large piece of furniture—a kind of wardrobe—stood against the wall on the side of the room to the left of the Doctor. There was also, between the Doctor and the near side of this wardrobe, a large upholstered chair which partly concealed from his view a portion of the lower part of the wardrobe.

The medium laid the slate on the floor a little distance in front of this wardrobe and then began a rapid discourse to the Doctor on spiritual science. He grew very excited and kept pacing the floor, advancing to a position near the Doctor and then returning to the far end of the room. As he made these pilgrimages up and down the room, he came near stepping on the slate as it lay in his way; so with his foot he pushed it slightly toward the wardrobe at each journey. Meanwhile he seemed to forget about the slate so intent was he on his lecture.

Had he been able to control the attention of the Doctor so as to "hold his eye" when secretly shoving the slate with his foot, as he would have been able to do

with ordinary persons, all would have gone well. The Doctor, however, was not so interested in the lecture as he was in the slate; and he saw it gradually worked nearer to the wardrobe at each excursion of the medium, until it was partly under this piece of furniture.

The Doctor now interposed and remarked to the medium that this performance had gone far enough; that his challenge was to produce a message without the slate leaving his sight, and that the slate was now nearly out of view. The medium grew very angry and stormed at the Doctor, but all to no avail. Finally the Doctor said to him that he himself was a magician and a performer of such tricks; that he did not intend exposing him, so that he might just as well confess. The medium hesitated a moment and then, laughing, said "Boys, you are too much for me. I own up." He then conducted them to the room adjoining theirs, where sat the medium's assistant waiting to perform his part of the trick. A small slot had been cut through the base-board adjoining the floor. This slot was directly underneath the wardrobe in the adjoining room. The assistant had an old-fashioned "soot scraper" such as is used for cleaning out the bottom of the old-time cooking stoves. With this useful article his task was to reach through the slot and draw or scrape the slate through the slot in the wall, and shove a duplicate into view while he wrote the message. When this was finished he drew back the duplicate and pushed the original slate into view.

When this was all over, the medium, finishing his discourse, would be suddenly reminded of the slate, look for it, and see it just out from under the wardrobe; then lifting it from the floor he would triumphantly hand it with its message to the sitter. The business was quite lucrative.

At another time a wonderful medium appeared in the same city and gave psychometric tests in a public hall to those bringing articles with them. The tests were very marvelous, and the medium carried away thousands of dollars.

All of this information was furnished to the medium by two prominent gentlemen in Kansas City, who knew nearly every one who attended spiritualist meetings. One of these gentlemen received a very fine test; and the medium, looking at him, said, "Did I ever see you before?" And the gentleman said, "You did not." Now, Dr. Wilson happened to know that at the time the medium was actually stopping at the home of this gentleman, who feigned that he was a total stranger to the medium.

Much of the work of mediums is performed in an impromptu or extempore manner. They must be familiar with the various tricks, but can not invariably follow any fixed rule. They must perform one way for one subject, and maybe in a wholly different manner for another. I can not better illustrate the extemporaneous nature of their work, than by describing two slate writings given by a professional medium whom I know.

Mediums are continually working for what they term "cases." This is where the medium exerts his spiritual influence in behalf of the subject in some matter, and for which he receives usually a goodly sum. Most ardent believers have some matter wherein they need assistance; and they usually employ a medium, if he impresses them properly, and if they believe implicitly in his powers.

There was an elderly gentleman who had repeatedly received slate writings from this medium, but never on slates of his own. The medium had been prevailing on this elderly gentleman to give him his "case," but the gentleman had no means of his own. He could only secure the necessary sum of money from his son-in-law, and the latter refused to let him have it, saying that all mediums were fraudulent; and that he would never advance the funds, unless the gentleman should secure a slate writing on his own slates.

Of this the gentleman informed the medium, and he then made an appointment with the medium for a certain evening that week. This gentleman had a spiritualistic book that dealt with an "Indian Spirit Guide," and some similar matters that interested him greatly, and over which he was very enthusiastic. This book he loaned to the medium to read, at the time when he made the appointment.

The old gentleman, at the proper time, went to a store and purchased two slates, carrying them to the home of the medium wrapped and tied in the original paper of the stationer. Meanwhile the medium had instructed his confederate, who was concealed in the adjoining yard. It was summer time and the medium's windows were open. A center table stood by an open window.

When the gentleman arrived, the medium directed him to lay his package on the table and to give him his attention for a few moments. The medium was reading in the "Indian Spirit" book, and seemed to greatly desire to discuss certain passages with the gentleman. A chair was placed so that the gentleman's back was towards the table; and as he was very enthusiastic over the aforesaid book, he became deeply interested in the discussion. Meanwhile

the confederate, who had seen the gentleman arrive, reached secretly through the open window, drew the slates out, untied them, wrote a message, re-tied and replaced them. When the medium saw them again in place on the table, he said to the gentleman, "You want a message on your own slates. I suppose you have them there. Of course you know that there is nothing on them; so just get them and hold them in your lap, still tied up." This the subject did. After a time the medium asked the gentleman to look and see if he had received anything.

The gentleman could only walk with a cane, and had not gone without one for years. When he saw his message, he became so excited that he immediately started to his son-in-law's home in Council Bluffs, to show his message in triumph; and in his excitement he never thought of his cane, and walked several blocks to the car line without it, and did not recover it for three days. I know the name of the confederate who wrote the message, and he is a resident of Omaha. The medium secured the gentleman's "case" without trouble after this.

I know another instance where this same medium sold to a business man of Omaha, who happened to be a believer, a girdle which he should wear and which would increase his business twenty per cent. He paid sixteen dollars for this girdle. I have secured one of these and have it in my possession.

At another time a gentleman had repeatedly received slate-writings from this medium, but decided to investigate further and bring his own slates. Now, mediums are not looking for patrons of this class, and only give them a sitting where there is considerable money or some good advertising to be gained thereby. At this time the medium had rooms in a business block. The believer moved into this block, taking a room on the floor above the medium, in order to be near him and have good opportunity to conduct his investigations.

The medium was not anxious; and although the gentleman came repeatedly with his own slates tied up in paper, always managed to put him off in some manner, saying that conditions were not right or something of the kind. Finally one day the medium saw the gentleman leave his rooms on some errand; and securing a pass key, he entered the gentleman's room, untied the slates, prepared a message, re-tying them and leaving all as before. He knew if the gentleman should make an examination and find the message, he would attribute it to "spirits," so he took the chance. In due time the gentleman

walked in with his slates still tied and under his arm. He had not opened them and he received a message that completely satisfied all of his previous doubts.

I also know of an instance where a medium stopped at the home of a believer over night. He was left alone in the room a short time while the host was busy elsewhere. During this time he succeeded in locating the host's slates (most believers have a set) tied up neatly in a bureau drawer. He quickly prepared a message, and again tied them up as before. Later he asked for some slates, and when they were brought out asked the host to hold them just as they were. His success was so great that he was paid a goodly fee; and this led to many "readings" by mail and quite frequently brought the medium a ten dollar bill in a letter, as the gentleman was wealthy. This gentleman lives in a small town about thirty miles from Omaha.

In case a medium or his assistant secretly obtains possession of a sitter's slates in a manner such as described in the first part of this number or by any other method, and they are securely screwed or fastened together, he may proceed with any of the methods given below.

If the two slates are screwed together, the assistant opens them with a screw-driver and replaces the screws after writing the message. If the screws are sealed, he may be able to remove the wax by passing a heated wire under the seals, and afterwards replace them with a small hot iron which he keeps over an alcohol flame for such purposes. If he is wholly unable to get into the slates, he then drives a small wedge between the frames spreading them a trifle, and inserts a corset steel with a small pencil at the end and does the writing with this.

If everything else fail, a message can be written on the outer sides of the slates, and there will be some effect; although the effect will be nothing like it would be if the message were inside.

In case a pencil can not be inserted between the slates with a corset steel, sometimes the message is written on a slip of paper and this can be slipped in rather easily.

III. SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS

PART 14

Message on a Sitter's Slate Produced by a Rubber Stamp

Message Produced by an Adroit Exchange of Slates

Chemical Tricks

Other Methods

Means of Securing Information

There is another case where a message is produced on a marked slate brought by a subject. In this case there is no assistant and the slate never leaves the sitter's hand. He is instructed to place his slate under and near the center of a small table, to press it up against the table and to hold it by the edges only. In a short time a message is found. In this case the message is printed by the medium pressing a rubber stamp containing it (and which is previously covered with powdered chalk), against the slate while under the table.

This stamp is made from a message written out by the medium, so that it looks like ordinary writing. It is attached to a rubber elastic under the medium's coat; and the chalk on its letters is not disturbed owing to the fact that the medium has a tin case or guard on his trousers at the top on one side.

The stamp is held in this tin guard or clamp until the slate is under the table. The medium pretends to feel under the table to see if the slate is in the right position. He secretly carries the stamp up in his hand, presses it quickly against the slate, then removing his hand, releases the stamp. It is drawn quickly out of sight by the elastic under his coat, just like a handkerchief vanisher used by a magician. The medium has a number of stamps each bearing different messages, so that he can select a suitable one for each sitter.

As I write this chapter, there is a medium about one hundred miles west of Omaha who is traveling around giving slate writings. His method is very simple but is perfectly successful.

He is very expert at talking, and can hold a subject's attention in a marvelous manner. During the entire experiment he talks constantly, with great rapidity, and greatly interests the subject.

He uses three slates, but the subject sees and examines but two. The third slate, with the message, is in a large pocket on the inside of his right coat

front He has the slates examined; and during this time he is nervously walking behind the subject, and then in front of him, tapping him on the shoulders, and talking rapidly. He takes the two examined slates and places them together, and stepping behind, the medium apparently places them on the subject's head, requesting him to reach up and grasp them. He immediately steps to the front without any cessation in his discourse, and completely controls the subject's attention; so that the latter thinks nothing of the fact that the medium passed back of him, and in fact soon forgets it.

Just as the medium steps back of the subject, he quickly takes the back slate with his left hand and leaves it in his large pocket, and instantly draws out and substitutes the prepared slate. He does this so quickly, without any pause in his walking or talking, that he never fails with the trick.

If a medium be a lady, she has many opportunities for slate writing that a male medium does not have. She can have so many large pockets in her skirts, and can so easily conceal and exchange slates under a table and in so many ways, that it is very hard to detect the exact means she may use. One lady medium had a mechanical rapper under her skirts which rapped loudly on the floor when she pressed her knees together. She could thus have the "spirits" announce in this mysterious manner when a message was completed.

There are also means for using secret panels, if a subject allow his slates near one, or even near any draperies; and in fact, there are so many secret means, that the only way a subject can be sure of a genuine slate writing is to have his own slates and never let them out of his hands or sight for even one instant after cleaning them. I do not think anyone will ever obtain such a writing.

There are also chemical tricks, although they are not so much used. If a message be prepared with nitrate of silver, and then breathed upon, it will vanish. If the slate be washed with salt water, the message appears but can not be erased. There are also dozens of chemicals for writing invisible messages on paper, which will appear from heat, or from the application of a blotter saturated with other chemicals. If a message be written on paper with a solution of sulphate of iron, it is invisible. If the paper be placed in an envelope moistened inside with a solution of nut-galls, the writing appears. The paper can be placed between slates just washed with the same solution, and the writing will soon be visible.

There are slate writing mediums such as Slade, who can use the toes for writing messages on slates laid on the floor under the table. The medium wears a shoe that he can slip off the foot easily, and the end of the stocking is cut away. There are also slate writers who write with a small piece of pencil held on the end of a single finger by a little piece of flesh colored court plaster with a hole in its center. In such cases the message is written while the hand pinches the slate up under the table. There is a thimble used, sometimes, with holders attached containing colored crayons; but it requires an expert to use it. Messages can be written on paper by the "court-plaster method" while holding the paper or card in the hand and waving it about.

In many of the slate tricks where an assistant is used, a system of speaking tubes can be employed with wonderful results if the medium be in his own home. The openings are concealed by picture molding, draperies, etc. They enable the assistant to hear all the information the medium gets from the subject during the reading, and he can thus prepare a more effective message. These same tubes can be utilized by the medium for producing "independent" whispers and voices in a room where he holds a circle. By the use of switches the voices appear to be first here, then there, or can even enter at all of the openings at once. Sound is very deceptive, and in the last case it appears to be in the very air.

There are many slate tricks that I have not described here; but I have endeavored to give the best, and also to give a good example of the different types, which will well illustrate the principles employed.

In reference to information furnished by mediums in slate writings or otherwise, there are so many means of obtaining the same, that it is difficult to be certain of a test of this kind. The "Blue Book" of Boston contains over seven thousand names alphabetically catalogued, with tests for each individual. Some of the names are marked with such marks as "D. E." (dead easy), etc.

Information is gathered from tombstones, old files of the daily papers and even by an advance agent who does secret detective work for that purpose. The most information used in circles, however, is obtained in the private readings given by the mediums. This is all catalogued, and used with telling effect.

The Devlyn Slate Move

by the kind permission of **Terry Tyson** in 2016

The following slate move was developed to provide a new approach to the display of un-gimmicked spirit slates. Most existing slate moves using un-gimmicked slates are concerned with *proving* to the audience that the slates are clean. To this end, clever numbering or lettering techniques are employed to apparently show all sides blank.

The presentations that accompany these slate moves further emphasize the labeling procedure in order to convince the audience that all four sides are free of messages.

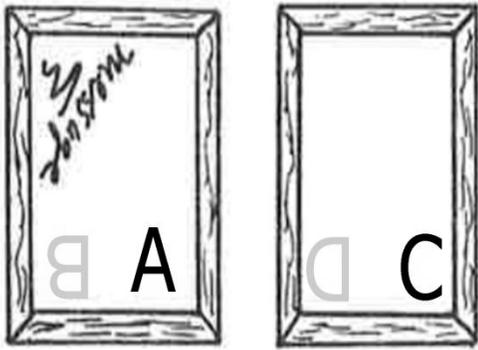
My primary argument with the old approach is that it screams of “Magicians Guilt”. If the audience were attending a real séance, the use of blank slates would be assumed, since clean slates are the only type that spirits chose to communicate on!

This old approach is essence, assumes that the audience may have a reason to doubt the medium’s statements, because the spirit worker is going thru such great pains to prove otherwise.

The following moves are nothing spectacular, but I feel they are a departure from the old techniques because these moves are executed in a very haphazard, nonchalant, and casual manner. In fact, the moves should look a bit sloppy, so as not to suggest moves at all!

Your job, of course, is made easier because the audience has already seen the slates during the “Living & Dead Test” (*as found in Séance Quarterly Magazine Number 8 Summer 1990*) and have become accustomed to their presence on the table. Additionally, the script should follow the basic premise that “Slates, much like these, were often used to contact spirits in séances of old. Indeed, many of the spirits that may communicate with us this evening, may have used slates like these to do their daily school lessons. Of course the slates must be clean and free of any markings.” While these lines are spoken, the moves are made and the slates are shown to be apparently clean.

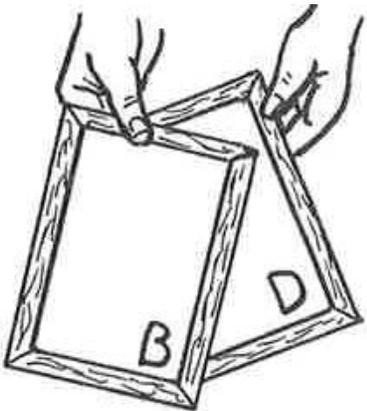
All views in the drawings are shown to be from the point of view of the audience. The slates have been “A-B” and “C-D” in the lower right hand corners to help clarify the moves. When lettering the slates, they were turned over side to side, not end over end. Of course in the performance, these letters are omitted.



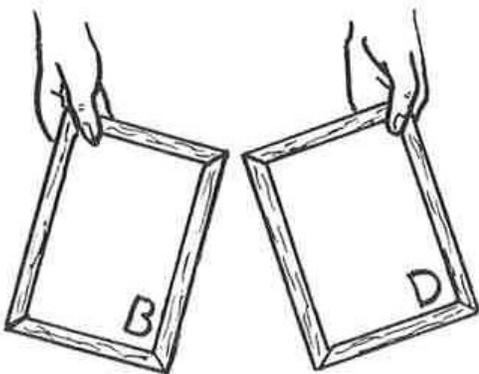
1) A message is written on the upper left hand corner of the slate labeled A-B. Write message on the side labeled A, covering about half the slate,



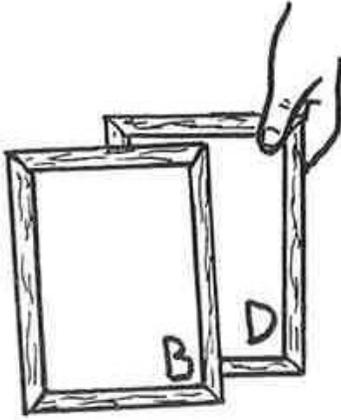
2) The slates are taken out, and slightly fanned with slate C-D covering the message on side A.



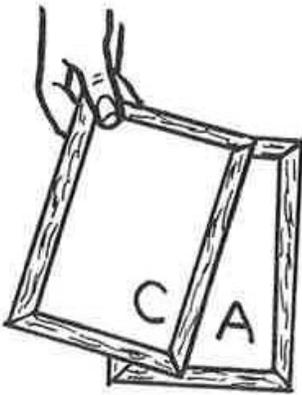
3) Both slates are turned as one showing sides B and D.



4) The slates are momentarily separated apart then.....



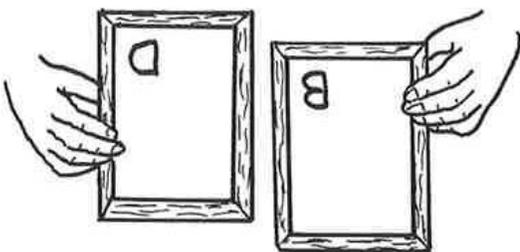
5) Brought together again. Using slate C-D, slate A-B is turned over. (This move resembles the “Mexican Turnover” for playing cards).



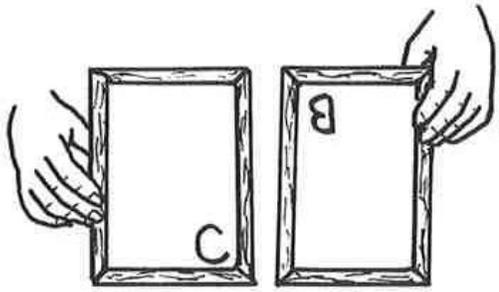
6) Slate C-D is transferred to the opposite hand, completing the turnover move. Slate C-D once again covers the message.



7) The slates are brought together and held in both hands, then flipped end over end.



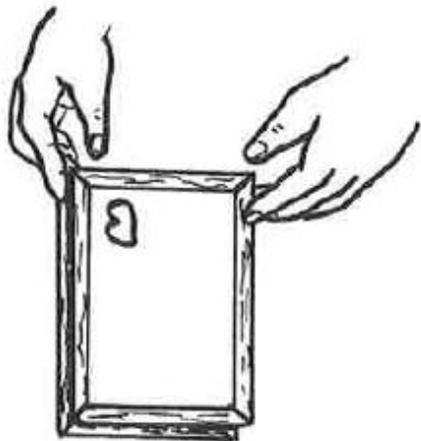
8) The slates are pulled apart once again.....



9) Slate C-D is flipped end for end and.....



10) Brought back behind slate A-B.



11) Both sides are aligned and placed on the table. At this point, a small piece of chalk may be placed between the slates and they may be bound with rubber bands or ribbon.

REMEMBER: All moves should be fluid and nonchalant. Do not emphasize that the sides are blank. Simply act as if you *know* that the slates are clean and have no reason for the audience to think otherwise. If a doubt exists in your demeanor, the audience is certain to pick it up.

Editor Note: Thanks to Lary Kuehn for telling me about the Devlyn Slate Move and providing the contact for Terry. Many thanks to Terry for sending me copies of the Devlyn Move and the Séance Quarterly Magazine to make this possible. A wonderful addition! Pete

